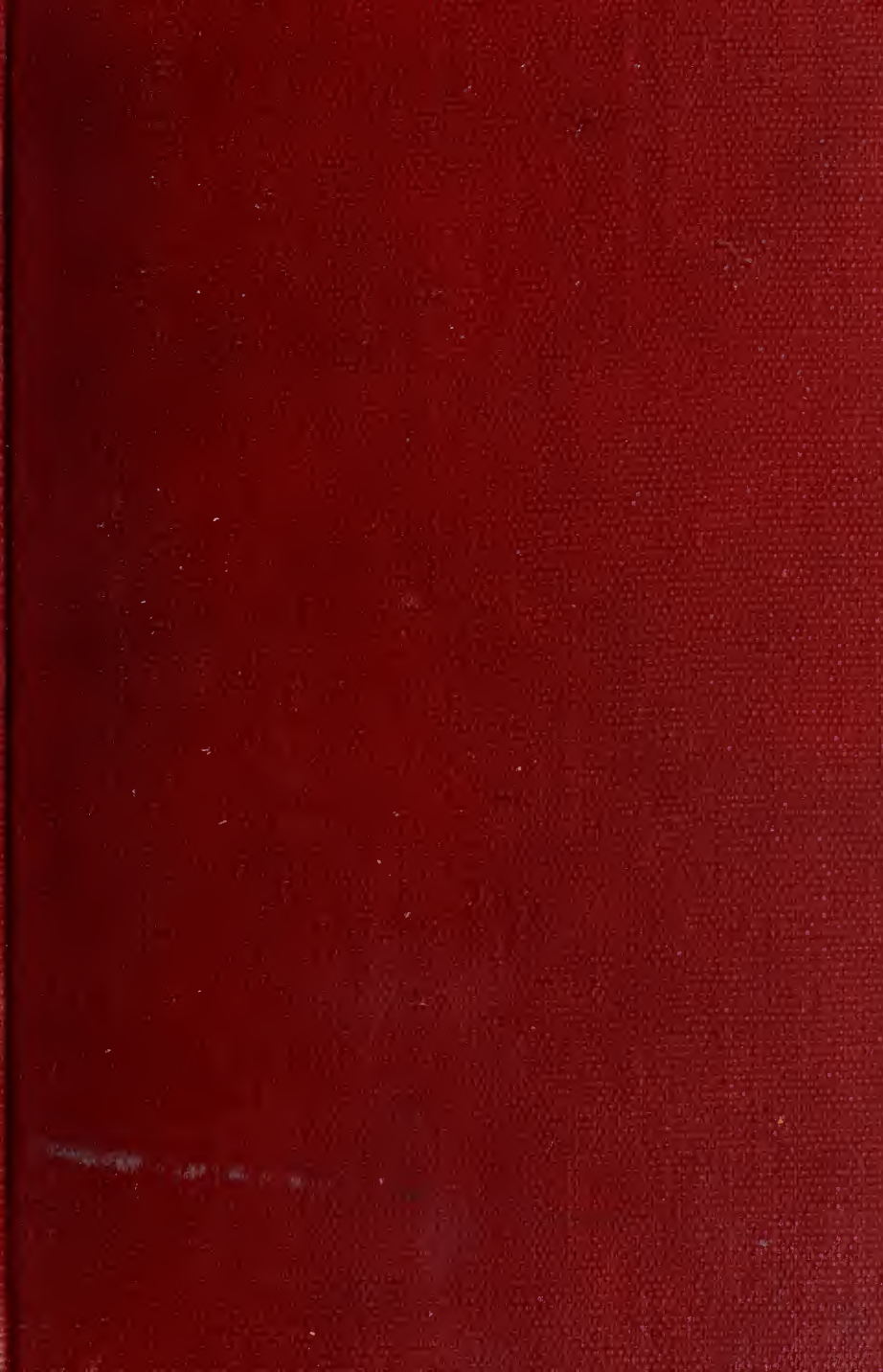






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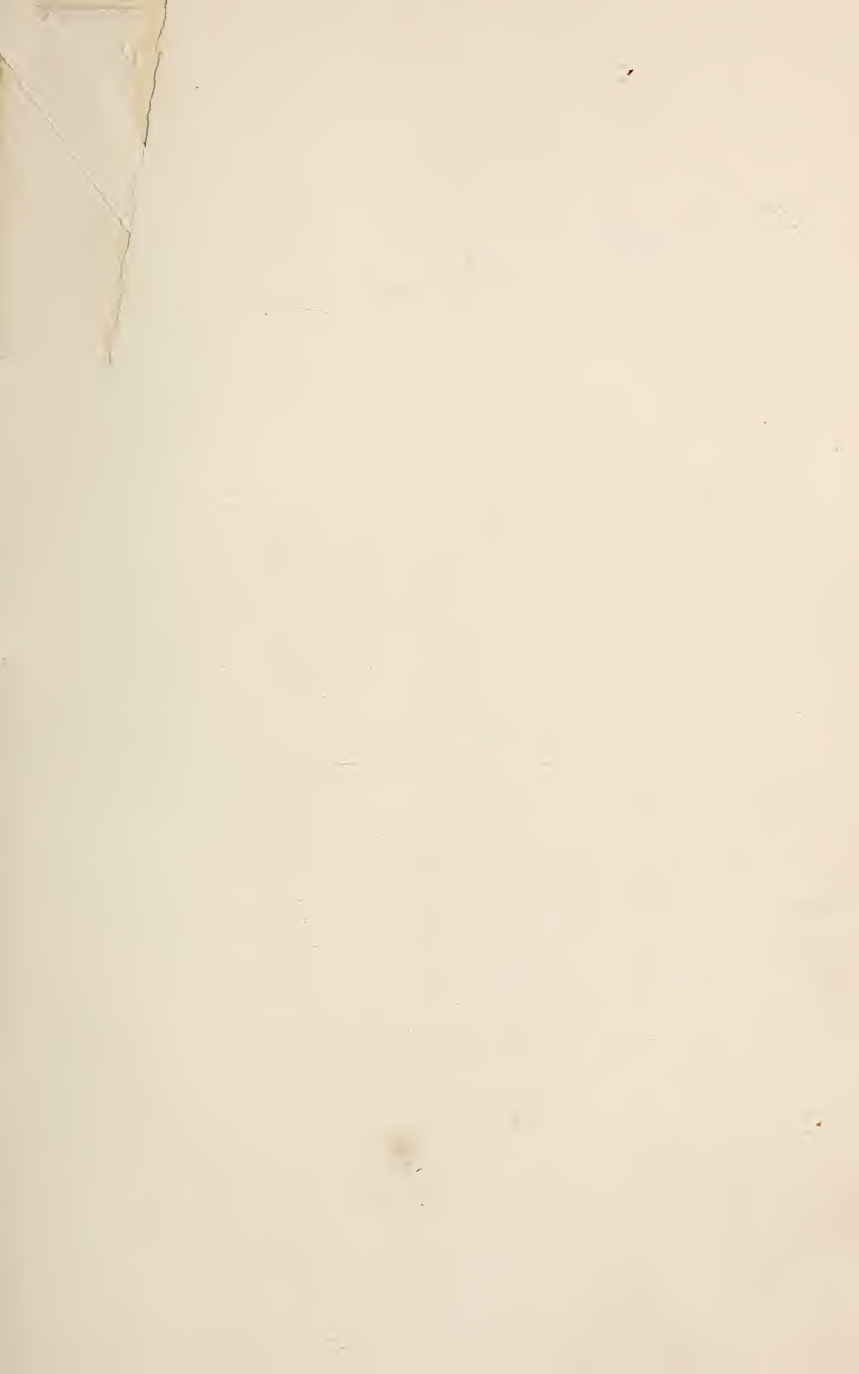
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PHILIP STANHOPE,
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

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LORD CHESTERFIELD'S
LETTERS TO HIS SON

*SELECTED AND EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

BY

JOSEPH B. SEABURY



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

BOSTON

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INTRODUCTION.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

FOR more than a century the name of Lord Chesterfield has been associated with good breeding and the accomplishments of refined society.

We picture this famous courtier a little below the average height, wearing the self-satisfied air of a man of the world, his bearing studied and graceful; his bow affable and gracious; his dress elegant and becoming; his smile serene and ingratiating; his features under absolute control, never betraying ill-temper nor breaking into loud laughter. It flattered him to be known as a man of pleasure and fashion, a model of politeness and winning address. It was his absorbing ambition to please.

As an offset to this side of his nature, it must be remembered that Lord Chesterfield possessed marked literary and oratorical ability. He was an admirable debater, a public speaker who commanded attention, a diplomatist who brought honor upon his country. Cardinal Newman called him the leading wit of the eighteenth century, an age when wit was regarded as a decided mark of talent. Dr. Samuel Johnson distinctly recognized this gift, when he said, derisively, he is "a lord among wits and a wit among lords." Allowance must, however, be

made for Dr. Johnson's bitterness of spirit against the man who had spoken lightly of his dictionary. Pope, who had a genuine admiration for Chesterfield, paid him this compliment:—

“Accept a miracle instead of wit,
See two dull lines by Stanhope's pencil writ.”

Again he exclaims:—

“How can I, Pulteney, Chesterfield forget,
While Roman spirit charms, or Attic wit?”

That which especially concerns this brief account of Lord Chesterfield is that he was a clear, forcible, and trenchant writer, “never straining at effect, and yet never hurried into carelessness.” His was the age of many of England's leading poets and essayists,—the age of Pope, Swift, Prior, Gay, Young, Addison, Bolingbroke, Bishop Berkeley, Goldsmith, and Dr. Johnson. Among these men, some of them his strong personal friends, he was an unique figure, maintaining an honorable rank as a master of classic English. Although his reputation has suffered because of weaknesses in his character and his apparent purpose in life to live chiefly for effect, he is held by critics of good literature, as a man whose epistolary writings are unrivalled for their ornate beauty of structure.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, was born in London, September 22, 1694. His mother died when he was very young, and he was placed under the care of his grandmother, Lady Halifax, a woman of good sense, culture, and refinement. The father of young

Stanhope is described as a man "of a morose disposition and violent passions, who often believed that people behaved ill to him, when they did not in the least intend it." Another writes:—"We know little more of him than that he was an earl of Chesterfield." Certain it is, that he seems to have conceived an aversion to his son and to have taken no interest in his education. The boy, therefore, lacked the incentive of a father's counsel and the inspiration of his example, and grew up unparented, without the sympathetic cheer of those nearest of kin. The superabundant use of French in his conversation and correspondence is traceable to the companionship of a nurse from Normandy, who taught him from his cradle. At an early age he showed a passion to excel in everything he undertook, a passion which, years later, he did his utmost to arouse in the heart of his son. Lord Galway, a general in the British army, and a man of uncommon penetration, often visited Philip Stanhope's early home. Observing in him a strong inclination to a political life, but at the same time an unconquerable taste for pleasure, with some tincture of laziness, he gave him the following advice:—"If you intend to be a man of business, you must be an early riser. In the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune will entitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors at every hour of the day, and unless you will rise constantly at an early hour, you will never have any leisure to yourself." The boy accepted and acted upon this advice; it aroused his ambition and had its effect upon him through life. His early education was given into the hands of private tutors.

Of this period of his life a letter to his son, written many years later, gives us a glimpse:—“When I was your age I should have been ashamed if any boy of that age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I should not have rested a moment till I had got before him.”

In the year 1712, at eighteen years of age, Lord Chesterfield entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he remained two years, acquiring a general knowledge of ancient and modern languages and oratory. Of special lines of work he subsequently wrote:—“So long ago as when I was at Cambridge, whenever I read pieces of eloquence (and indeed they were my principal study), whether ancient or modern, I used to write down the shining passages, and then translate them as well and elegantly as ever I could; if Latin or French, into English; if English, into French. This, which I practiced for some years, not only improved and formed my style, but imprinted in my mind and memory the best thoughts of the best authors.” His life at Cambridge was on the whole congenial. Speaking of Trinity itself, he writes, “I find the college where I am infinitely the best in the University, for it is the smallest, and filled with lawyers who have lived in the world and know how to behave.” In these words we have the mirror in which to see the real Philip Stanhope. In his view, to know how to conduct one’s self properly and to behave in society of cultivated people, was a large part of that knowledge which is worth having.

After leaving college he travelled abroad, according to custom among young Englishmen. He visited Holland

and Italy. But at Paris (1714) he was in his element and adapted himself, apparently without effort, to the ways of the French. His own words are the best picture of his life at the gay capital:—"I shall not give you my opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one of them; and several of them have paid me the highest compliment they think it in their power to bestow; which is, 'Sir, you are just like ourselves!' I shall only tell you that I am insolent; I talk a great deal; I am very loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I walk along; and, above all, I spend an immense sum in hair-powder, feathers, and white gloves."

Stanhope entered the House of Commons in 1715, a few months before he was of legal age. His maiden speech was pronounced fluent, graceful, and assertive. At its conclusion an honorable member spoke to him in a very complimentary manner of his effort, but reminded him that he lacked six weeks of attaining his majority, and consequently was likely to be heavily fined for opening his mouth in the House of Commons. With a low bow Chesterfield turned quickly away, and went to Paris, where he became acquainted with the Jacobite Plot. The Jacobites were adherents of James II., King of England, a quarter of a century earlier. Some of their schemes to overthrow the king then in power, George I., were reported to the throne by Philip Stanhope. A year later he returned to London, and, resuming his seat in the House, took part frequently in the debates and proceedings of that body.

Mr. Stanhope did not possess the requisite grit for the wrangling and repartee of a great popular assembly.

He lacked nerve and sinew. But the chief reason why the controversies of the House was distasteful to him was his fear of ridicule. He stood in awe of one member in particular, a man who had the art of imitating and counterfeiting the speakers to whom he replied. This seems the more probable, for, in one of his letters to his son, Chesterfield says that "ridicule, though not founded upon truth, will stick for some time, and, if thrown by a skillful hand, perhaps forever."

By the death of his father in 1726, Philip Stanhope became the Earl of Chesterfield, inheriting a fortune. He at once took his seat in the House of Lords, where his oratory was fully recognized and his influence strongly felt. It was a more fitting arena for his "delicate irony, fine humor, persuasive tones, and gracefully flowing periods," than the House of Commons. Within five years he was acknowledged to be a leader of the Upper House.

Upon the accession of George II., Lord Chesterfield was sent to Holland as the English ambassador at the Hague. By his tact, his finished address, his dexterity in dealing with men, his knowledge of Dutch history and customs, he did great service for his country. Returning to London in 1732, he resumed his seat in the House of Lords, where he became prominent in the defense of many of the great measures for England's welfare. Chesterfield bitterly withstood Sir Robert Walpole, first Lord of the Treasury, whose downfall was brought about largely through his intrepid opposition. He attacked the King himself, who hated him in return. In the confused state of foreign politics, Chesterfield was chosen to represent Eng-

land at the court of Holland, and he was sent a second time to the Hague. Having successfully fulfilled his mission, he returned to England.

The most important position assigned to him was that of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a position which he long desired to fill. Although the service lasted but eighteen months (1745–1746), it reflected great credit upon its incumbent. To have outlined a salutary policy and to have put it into successful operation in so short a time, made Chesterfield very distinguished. In 1746 he became Secretary of State under George II., an office which he resigned in 1748. About this time he writes to a near friend as follows:—“Could I do any good I would sacrifice some more quiet to it; but, convinced as I am that I can do none, I will indulge my ease, and preserve my character. I have gone through pleasures while my constitution and my spirits would allow me. Business succeeded them, but I have now gone through every part of it without liking it at all the better for being acquainted with it. Like many other things it is most admired by those who know it the least. . . . I have been behind the scenes both of pleasure and business; I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move all the gaudy machines, and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant multitude.”

Occasionally he was drawn from private life to the House of Lords, where he took part in some prominent debate. The importance of reforming the calendar appealed to his practical good sense, and into this measure he

threw great energy. He had to meet strong popular prejudice, but this he overcame, and in 1751 he was successful in bringing about the reformation.

In 1752 he became afflicted with deafness, which increased so steadily that three years later he said, "Public life and I are parted forever." He retired to his quiet country seat and to the pleasures of idleness. Discontent and disappointment grew upon him, leading him to say in a pitiful and querulous spirit:—"I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

During the twenty years of life which remained to him he sought diversion in reading, in writing letters, and in various games of chance of which he was passionately fond. He grew moody, cheerless, desolate, but his wit did not forsake him, as appears in the famous jest regarding his friend and companion:—"Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known."

The noted French writer, Montesquieu, whose eyesight had failed him, once said to the subject of this sketch, "I know how to be blind." To this Chesterfield could not agree regarding his deafness. He bore it heavily but remarked upon it philosophically:—"The exchange of letters is the conversation of deaf people, and that only connects them with society."

As the years passed he grew despondent of his country's future, and took a gloomy view of society, educa-

tion, and morals. He found some pleasure in cultivating the pineapples and melons in his garden at Blackheath, his country seat. As the end of life drew near, he wrote (1765):—"I feel this beginning of the autumn which is already very cold; the leaves are withered, fall apace, and seem to intimate that I must follow them, which I shall do without reluctance, being extremely weary of this silly world."

He retained his wonderful memory to the end, also that presence of mind which always characterized him. Shortly before his death (March 24, 1773) a friend called to see him. Noticing him standing the earl spoke to his attendant in a feeble but intelligible voice, "Give Dayrolles a chair." They were Lord Chesterfield's last words. "His good breeding," said Dr. Warren, the attending physician, "only quits him with his life."

In the year 1732 a son was born to Lord Chesterfield in Holland; he was named Philip Stanhope. Sainte-Beuve, the French critic, speaks of him as "one of those ordinary men of the world of whom it suffices to say there is nothing to be said." But those who knew him best describe him as "a sensible, plain-mannered man, with a good deal of book knowledge, and with no pretension to elegance in look, gesture, or tone." The good traits in Philip Stanhope count for less than their true worth, in the light of his father's absorbing determination that he should shine in the world. The task which his ambitious father set before himself was to make of this lad an accomplished courtier, a foreign minister, a confidential adviser

of the heir to the throne. When the boy was sixteen he was sent abroad with a private tutor, the Rev. Walter Harte. Subsequently he entered the House of Commons, where he failed as a debater, having no taste for the discussion of public questions. He was appointed an envoy at Dresden, a fifth-rate diplomatic station. He never rose to the heights which his father had pictured for him. He was not a youth of talent, his presence was not pleasing, nor his manners polished. He died in 1768, aged thirty-six years.

Let Chesterfield himself tell us what he thinks of his son:—"As to the boy, it is partiality, but I think him amiable; he has a pretty face, he has much sprightliness, and I think intelligence, for his age. He speaks French perfectly; he knows a good deal of Latin and Greek, and he has ancient and modern history at his fingers' ends." Intending to send him to Paris for polish and refinement, he adds:—"I love the child dearly, and have set myself to make something good of him, as I believe he has the stuff in him; my idea is to unite in him what has never been found in one person before—I mean the best qualities of the two nations."

Lord Chesterfield's literary reputation rests upon his "Letters to his Son," one thousand in number. It is an interesting fact that they were never intended for publication, but were his personal and private correspondence with his son, whose widow sold them to a publisher for \$7875. They were given to the public in the year 1774. At once they took a prominent place as models

of fine English, and were eagerly read, the sale reaching a high figure within a short time.

The range of these Letters is wide and deserves particular attention. They begin with an introduction upon the elements of geography and history, written largely in French, with which young Stanhope became familiar early in life. Passing on to Greek and Latin, Lord Chesterfield says:—"You are by this time, I hope, pretty near master of both, so that a small part of the day dedicated to them, for two years more, will make you perfect in that study." It should be remarked that Chesterfield did not set that superlatively high value on the classical languages which was the custom of his day, and yet we find him saying in one of his early letters:—"Pray mind Greek particularly, for to know Greek very well is to be really learned; there is no great credit in knowing Latin, for everybody knows it, and it is only a shame not to know it." He maintained the importance of modern languages, of history (especially Roman), of science and art.

As a foreign minister, the over-counseled son would need three things:—(1) a knowledge of the world; (2) elegant manners; (3) a not too scrupulous regard for the moral law. To be graceful in bodily movements, to be chivalrous and gallant, to deliver a witty speech, to be brilliant in repartee, to make a fine impression, were necessary to success at every foreign court. The letters are a "perfect system of good breeding." The fond father never disguised his desire for his son's position in the world:—"My plan for you from the beginning has been

to make you shine equally in the learned and in the polite world." The Letters aim at refinement; they end in super-refinement; they polish until they seem to reduce the gold of a man's character to a very thin surface.

There was an undercurrent of intensity in Chesterfield's nature. What he desired in his son he desired passionately. Every statement he buttressed strongly with telling epithets, antitheses, contrasts; as, for example:—"The scholar without good breeding is a pedant; a philosopher, a cynic; a soldier, a brute; and every man disagreeable."

Although much of the moral obliquity in these Letters must be attributed to the age in which their author lived, there is no justification for the transparent stratagem, the sordid policy, the puerile finesse, with which he would adorn his son's conduct. It is beneath the dignity of a wise and discreet father to say, as Chesterfield did:—"Make your court particularly and show distinguished attention to such men and women as are best at court, highest in the fashion, and in the opinion of the public; speak advantageously of them behind their backs, in companies who, you have reason to believe, will tell them again."

The lack of so little reference to morality is quite unaccountable in a parent whose religious affiliations were with a leading ecclesiastical order. His own personal character was "selfish, calculating, and contemptuous; he practised dissimulation until it became part of his nature." This parental counsel illustrates it:—"A young fellow ought to be wiser than he should

seem to be, and an old fellow ought to seem wiser whether he really be or not." The art of getting on, the art of making one's self popular, led him to study the best ways of addressing a person. He believed in the most persistent self-restraint:—"Be wiser than other people if you can, but do not tell them so." A man who set so low an estimate upon the moralities of life, could easily write:—"As to the moral virtues, I say nothing to you. I don't speak of religion, I am not in a position to do so; the excellent Mr. Harte will do that."

Chesterfield almost deified "the Graces." "Remember the Graces! I would have you sacrifice to the Graces," by which he meant the high "art of pleasing," which he again describes as "the art of rising, of distinguishing one's self, of making a figure and a fortune in the world." He inculcated patience, courtesy, "dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie, sagacity enough to read other people's countenances, and serenity enough not to let them discover anything by yours; a seeming frankness with a real reserve."

On the other hand, the genuine good sense which these pages contain strikes the most casual reader. Even the disproportionate emphasis placed upon trivial matters does not lessen but rather increases the value of the wise and discreet sentences. Chesterfield cautions his son against speaking of himself, except when it is absolutely necessary to do so. "But when historically you are obliged to mention yourself take care not to drop one single word that can directly or indirectly be construed

as fishing for praise." This attitude towards society is quite consistent with that taken in other Letters, where he instills the art of getting on by forecasting what may be the outcome of saying laudatory things. In the former case, the purpose is simply personal flattery; in the latter it is personal advancement which may bring opportunities of good.

The accurate knowledge of the country in which his son may be tarrying, its geography, history, laws; the proper expenditure of money, and keeping exact cash accounts; the care of the body and personal cleanliness; the art of letter writing; the need of mental application; the proper employment of time; caution in forming friendships; the use and abuse of learning; the kind of society to frequent; the use of notebooks in traveling; the secret cause of great historical events; the value of a good enunciation and the means of acquiring it; the importance of a good handwriting; the different orders of architecture; French literature; how to read history; these and a hundred other subjects are taken up and treated as if written for a critical eye and for the public to note and ponder.

It is an important feature of these Letters that they require endless effort to accomplish one's purpose. Nothing is worth one's while to attempt that does not demand the utmost care and attention to details. The unwearied pen of Chesterfield himself illustrates and enforces the lesson he repeatedly inculcates. The lofty principle that everything costs which has any real worth, costs in proportion to its worth, and costs all it is worth, has been made much of in these Letters.

The author shows wonderful insight into human nature ; he analyzes with rare discrimination the motives which govern men ; he gives wholesome advice as to matters of everyday account ; and he unfolds the meaning of a moral quality, making it stand out boldly and attractively. Take for example, virtue. He first calls his son's attention to it as a matter of great importance. If the boy were to set to himself the task of writing about it, he would first consider what virtue is, and then what are the effects and marks of it, with regard to one's self. He would find that "virtue consists in doing good and in speaking truth." He then considers its effects upon others. It makes them pity and relieve the miseries of men ; it promotes justice and good order in society ; it produces comfort and satisfaction ; and, in general, it contributes to whatever tends to the real good of mankind. "Riches, power, and greatness may be taken away from us by the violence and injustice of others, or inevitable accidents, but virtue depends only on ourselves, and nobody can take it away."

In the art of illustration these Letters reach a high plane of excellence. Every page is illuminated by simple but forcible similes and metaphors, in nearly every case using familiar objects. Take for example this quotation : — "Virtue and learning, like gold, have their intrinsic value ; but if they are not polished, they certainly lose a great deal of their lustre ; and even polished brass will pass upon more people than rough gold." The writer pleads for accurate knowledge, as a necessary retreat for one in his advanced age, comparing it to a tree, "and if we do not plant it while young, it will give us no shade when we grow old."

In the field of contrast and antithesis Chesterfield was especially forcible. This may be shown in his favorite subject of manner and address, when presenting himself in company :—“Let them be respectful without meanness, easy without too much familiarity, genteel without affectation, and insinuating without any seeming art or design.”

Although, as is justly claimed, some of the Letters of Lord Chesterfield are written from a low moral plane, in other Letters the author inculcates a high standard of ethics, as in the words :—“There is nothing so delicate as your moral character, and nothing which it is your interest so much to preserve pure. Should you be suspected of injustice, malignity, perfidy, lying, etc., all the facts and knowledge in the world will never procure you esteem, friendship, or respect. A strange concurrence of circumstances has sometimes raised very bad men to high stations; but they have been raised like criminals to a pillory, where their persons and their crimes, by being more conspicuous, are only the more known, the more detested, and the more pelted and insulted.”

These Letters, which have stood the test of time, are, as a whole, models of literary finish, unexcelled in their penetration into the ways of men, in their practical good sense, their terse and epigrammatic diction, their fine portrait painting, their keen wit, their nice distinctions of thought, and their comprehensive mastery of every detail of life.

PERSONAL LETTERS AS LITERATURE.

Literature has been defined as "the collective body of literary productions in general, or within a particular sphere, period, country, language, etc." It was once confined to *belles-lettres*, or the product of thought, sentiment, fancy, or imagination, as poetry, fiction, essays, eloquence. In the growth of knowledge the range of literature has constantly widened. Some of the finest specimens of literature are to-day found in the sphere of history and science. It has also achieved victories in the realm of art, philosophy, travel, theology, sociology, and politics. Who would think of excluding from the field of literature the works of Huxley, Agassiz, Darwin, Prescott, Phillips Brooks, and John Fiske?

Whatever adds to the permanent treasury of elegant writing augments a nation's literature. In the evolution of a people's life, in the broadening of their interests, and the increase of their learning, the scope of their literature grows constantly wider and wider. The man of letters, of science, of public affairs, takes a more prominent place before the world each year. The people are interested in him personally, his methods of study, his home life, his friendships, his inner self; and the man who can tell the story is a recognized power and takes rank among the literary men of his time. The literary reputation of Dean Stanley rests to a good degree on the high standing his "Life of Thomas Arnold" takes among books.

One feature of biographical literature has of late years

been made much of, that is, correspondence. Many biographies now appear under this title, "Life and Letters of ——"

The correct writing of letters has always been regarded as an accomplishment. In many cases, however, the record of a man's life is hardly more than a collection of his letters. It was Boswell who said:—"I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life than, not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote and said and thought." Upon this principle was framed the most noted biography ever written—Boswell's "Life of Johnson." It is maintained that this feature has been carried too far in that famous book. One easily gets weary of a man's correspondence, where every letter he wrote, no matter how ordinary it is, must be published. Upon some famous biographers rests the responsibility of establishing an unfortunate precedent in this direction. The golden mean, dictated by prudence, demands that a man's own words, as expressed in his private correspondence, shall have their proper place. In many cases so valuable is the biographical material and so fine the style, that letters are now regarded as a part of literature.

The conditions of a good style are found in much of the best published correspondence. One is *naturalness*. Mr. John Morley reminds us that the epistolary charm vanishes in the anticipation of an audience. He severely interdicts the letters of Gray and Walpole on this account; they were written "as with printer and publisher before them and the whole literary and fine world looking over their shoulders." This charge cannot be laid at the door of Lord

Chesterfield, as his Letters were never intended for publication. They are the earnest, vivid, glowing, direct outflow of a father's heart for the welfare of his son: only one person was to read them. They are utterly devoid of artificiality of form. Nothing could be farther from the mind of their author than to write for literary effect.

These Letters show at once the value of having but one person to whom to direct words of counsel and of stimulus to good conduct. To bring to bear upon him, and him alone, every possible argument for the proper use of time, the care of the person, the importance of reading widely, and a host of other matters equally important, led the author to write in most fascinating naturalness. An English officer once said of the Duke of Wellington, that he did not write as well after the battle of Waterloo as before, because he knew that whatever he wrote would be printed; he wrote with the printer ever at his elbow. From this embarrassment Chesterfield was totally free. He divined his son's needs with marvelous intuitiveness. Discarding all the circumventions of rhetoric, he wrote letter after letter with utmost ease and charm, every word finding its fit place in unstilted phraseology.

Although Chesterfield's address was conciliatory and complacent, although he was most decorous in his fealty to etiquette, was punctilious as a courtier, and urbane as a man of fashion, he did everything in a simple, natural way. In his personal bearing we perceive neither the statesman nor the man of political power; we rather associate his presence with the "triumphs of tailoring," with a certain quality which is a degree or two below the best type

of Englishmen. And yet all that he was came to him by nature. His Letters show this charm completely. They are his own graceful self, his native ways transferred to paper. He defines letters as "familiar conversations between absent friends." Addressing his son he says:—"When you write me, suppose yourself conversing freely with me by the fireside," and again, "Let me see more of yourself in your letters." To this touchstone he brought his own style. He showed himself, not in mannerisms, but in most enchanting fluency, euphony, and felicity. It was the man himself infusing his intense nature into his task, which was, to say that which it was his duty and his willing purpose to say, in as pithy and readable a manner as possible. Chesterfield gives the first quality of good letter writing its true place in these words, "Letters should be easy and natural, and convey to the persons to whom we send them, just what we should say to the persons if we were with them." And again, in speaking of the letters of two French ladies, he says:—"They are so natural, they seem to be the extempore conversations of two people of wit, rather than letters, which are commonly studied, though they ought not to be so."

Another element of good style found in these letters is *vigor*: not vivacity only, nor rapidity of movement, nor force of diction, but vivid, poignant, incisive English. The thought is animated, and its phrasing in perfect adjustment to its many turns and shades. "I am not writing poetry, but useful reflections," says Chesterfield. Granted that, in the judgment of wise men, many of his "reflections" were not always of the most "useful" sort,

to him they were weighty, and they were written with all the gravity of a moralist, or a man who was trying to launch some great reform. So distinct was his aim and determined his will, that every sentence teems with force. It sometimes provokes a smile that this noble Lord should write with such serious animation on so many minor matters. It has something of the same effect as Rufus Choate's impassioned eloquence in defense of his client's right to a side-saddle, which convulsed the court.¹ But viewing life from Chesterfield's standpoint, noting the vigor of these Letters upon matters of small moment and of great, we can but feel the force of his virile style.

Another feature of these Letters is *clearness*. In the writing of letters perspicuity is essential. The art of writing to a person is the art of saying, in a perfectly lucid way, what you want to have him know. "The infinite confusion," by which some writing of the past has been characterized, has no congenial ground in an ideal correspondence. Whateley's witticism, referring to a certain class of writers, will not apply here:—"They aim at nothing and hit it." Chesterfield's Letters have a distinct purpose; they may be classified according to subjects. He enjoined the utmost care in the form; having determined what he should say, it was essential that the phrasing of the letter be fitting:—"Let your letter be written as accurately as you are able—I mean with regard to language, grammar, and stops; for as to the matter of it the less trouble you give yourself the better it will be." He held up before his son models of letter writing. He cited

¹ Phelps's "English Style in Pulpit Discourse," p. 203.

Cicero as a good example of the friendly and familiar style. But for simplicity and clearness he commended the correspondence of Cardinal D'Ossat: — "No affected turns, no attempt at wit, obscure or perplex his matter; which is always plainly and clearly stated."

Clearness in letter writing is an essential element in two departments of literature, — biography and history.

The biographer of a man of science, like Agassiz; of a great general like Grant; of an educator, like Thomas Arnold; of a statesman, like Lord Beaconsfield, gives us, in his personal words to friends, the exact language of the man of whom he writes. They are in most cases the clearest style of those very men. They are often their best style. Oftentimes a scientific man will give a popular turn to a statement of his in one of his letters, which he fails to do in a treatise. The request of Matthew Arnold, that his life should not be written, was respected, but his letters have been published. They are specimens of choice writing; in clearness of style, they are superior to some portions of his controversial works, and are, in their transparency, vastly superior to much of his poetry.

The element of clearness in letters greatly enhances the work of the historian, also. In the year 1895, the Trustees of the British Museum published a volume of letters, facsimiles of royal and historical autographs, gathered together from many centuries. They present invaluable historic material. Much of this is given in connected and related form, upon which the historian with trained intellect readily seizes, as of immense value. Lord Bacon

says:—"Letters are the best materials for history, and to a diligent reader, the best histories in themselves." This is the utterance of a great mind, emphasizing the value of letters as a treasury of historic truth. Written in a familiar style, they are lucid, and the lucidity of letter writing is one of its finest qualities. In a vein of criticism, Ruskin writes:—"It is too much the habit of modern biographers to confuse epistolary talk with vital fact." Yet more "vital fact" comes out in correspondence than in almost any other way.

A prominent quality of good letter writing is *beauty*. It has been said that letters have taken their place among the classics of our literature. The letters of Mendelssohn, of Agassiz, of Lord Lawrence, of Pascal, are gems of literary finish. They add materially to the body of our literature and its ever-growing charm. They are dependent upon certain fundamental qualities of mind, upon definite and inherent gifts of the soul. Delicacy of mental perception, sensitiveness of feeling, are the materials out of which an elegant style comes. Add to this original thinking, and an intuitive power of expression, and we have, as a product, such a writer as Chesterfield. His Letters are so finely written as to cause wonder that they are made the medium for so much attention to the details of composition. Not a pedantic nor a lazy line is found in them. Chesterfield illustrates the definition of style given by his friend, Dean Swift:—"Style is proper words in proper places." But our author goes beyond mere propriety and fitness; he seeks for elegance and is as particular to secure it, as he

would be, were he preparing a commemorative oration. He believed that to introduce a Latin or a French phrase added beauty to his sentence, and this "grace" he unweariedly enjoined upon his son.

His view of the importance of cultivating a rhythmic style is apparent in his own words:—

"An unharmonious and rugged period at this time shocks my ears, and I, like all the rest of the world, will willingly exchange and give up some degree of rough sense for a good degree of pleasing sound."

So refined was the author's taste, so wide his reading, so delicate his sense of propriety, that his Letters partook of his artistic nature. Applying to his task of writing fully and adequately his unflagging industry, precision, and earnestness, he has left for all time a mass of Letters which in purity and elegance of style, are not surpassed by anything in our literature.

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS TO HIS SON.

LETTER I.¹

TRAVELLING IN HOLLAND.

MY DEAR BOY,

I AM informed, sir, that you are about to travel, and that you will start with Holland. Therefore I have thought it my duty to wish you a pleasant journey and favorable winds. You will, I am sure, be so good as to acquaint me with your arrival at the Hague; and afterwards, if in your travels you should observe anything curious, will you let me know?

Holland, where you are going, is by far the finest and richest of the seven united Provinces, which together form the Republic, etc.² Adieu.

¹ The Letters produced in this volume are numbered for the sake of reference. As edited and published by Lord Mahon (London, 1845), they are not numbered, but are arranged according to dates. The order of time is preserved in the present volume.

² This letter, to which no date is attached, is the first of a long series covering a period of about thirty years. It is characteristic of its author to address as "Sir" a boy of the mature age of five years, and, also, to instil in him a love of geography, history, and the affairs of nations. This letter was written in French, a translation being given here. The other letters quoted were written in English.

LETTER II.

HONEST PRAISE.

TUNBRIDGE,¹ July 15, 1739.

DEAR BOY,

I THANK you for your concern about my health; which I would have given you an account of sooner, but that writing does not agree with these waters. I am better since I have been here; and shall therefore stay a month longer.

Signor Zamboni² compliments me, through you, much more than I deserve; but pray do you take care to deserve what he says of you; and remember, that praise, when it is not deserved, is the severest satire and abuse; and the most effectual way of exposing people's vices and follies. This is a figure of speech called Irony; which is saying directly the contrary of what you mean; but yet it is not a lie, because you plainly show, that you mean directly the contrary of what you say; so that you deceive nobody. For example; if one were to compliment a notorious knave for his singular honesty and probity, and an eminent fool for his wit and parts, the irony is plain, and everybody would discover the satire. Or, suppose that I were to commend you for your great attention to your book, and for your retaining and remembering what you have once learned; would not you plainly perceive the irony, and see that I laughed at you? Therefore, whenever you are commended for anything, consider fairly, with yourself, whether you deserve it or not; and if you do not deserve it, remember that you are only abused and laughed at;

¹ A noted watering-place in Kent, England, thirty miles southeast of London. Its salt springs were discovered in 1606.

² In these Letters may be found reference to persons to-day unknown. They were personal acquaintances or friends of Lord Chesterfield.

and endeavor to deserve better for the future, and to prevent the irony.

Make my compliments to Mr. Maittaire,¹ and return him my thanks for his letter. He tells me, that you are again to go over your Latin and Greek Grammar; so that when I return, I expect to find you very perfect in it; but if I do not, I shall compliment you upon your application and memory. Adieu.

LETTER III.

THE ART OF SPEAKING CORRECTLY.

BATH,² October 17, 1739.

MY DEAR BOY,

YOU cannot but be convinced, that a man who speaks and writes with elegance and grace; who makes choice of good words; and adorns and embellishes the subject, upon which he either speaks or writes, will persuade better, and succeed more easily in obtaining what he wishes, than a man who does not explain himself clearly; speaks his language ill; or makes use of low and vulgar expressions; and who has neither grace nor elegance in anything that he says. Now it is by rhetoric that the art of speaking eloquently is taught; and though I cannot think of grounding you in it as yet, I would wish, however, to give you an idea of it suitable to your age.³

The first thing you should attend to is, to speak whatever language you do speak, in its greatest purity, and according to the rules of grammar; nor make use of words which are

¹ Michael Maittaire (1668-1747), author of works on classic antiquity. He was of French extraction.

² A town in Somersetshire, one of the leading watering-places in England. Its saline springs were noted in Roman times. Bath was a place of resort as early as the first century.

³ The hopelessness of such a task is apparent when it is remembered that Philip Stanhope was at this time seven years of age.

not really words. This is not all; for not to speak ill is not sufficient; we must speak well; and the best method of attaining to that, is to read the best authors with attention; and to observe how people of fashion speak, and those who express themselves best; for shopkeepers, common people, footmen, and maid-servants, all speak ill. Adieu.

LETTER IV.

HONORABLE AMBITIONS.

DEAR BOY,

I SEND you here a few more Latin roots, though I am not sure that you will like my roots so well as those that grow in your garden; however, if you will attend to them, they may save you a great deal of trouble. These few will naturally point out many others to your own observation; and enable you, by comparison, to find out most derived and compound words, when once you know the original root of them. You are old enough now to make observations upon what you learn; which, if you would be pleased to do, you cannot imagine how much time and trouble it would save you. Remember, you are now very near nine years old; an age at which all boys ought to know a great deal, but you, particularly, a great deal more, considering the care and pains that have been employed about you; and if you do not answer those expectations, you will lose your character; which is the most mortifying thing that can happen to a generous mind. Everybody has ambition, of some kind or other, and is vexed when that ambition is disappointed: the difference is, that the ambition of silly people is a silly and mistaken ambition; and the ambition of people of sense is a right and commendable one. For instance; the ambition of a silly boy of your age, would be to have fine clothes, and money to throw away in idle

follies; which, you plainly see, would be no proofs of merit in him, but only of folly in his parents, in dressing him out like a jackanapes, and giving him money to play the fool with. Whereas a boy of good sense places his ambition in excelling other boys of his own age, and even older, in virtue and knowledge. His glory is in being known always to speak the truth, in showing good-nature and compassion, in learning quicker, and applying himself more than other boys. These are real proofs of merit in him, and consequently proper objects of ambition; and will acquire him a solid reputation and character. This holds true in men, as well as in boys: the ambition of a silly fellow will be, to have a fine equipage, a fine house, and fine clothes; things which anybody, that has as much money, may have as well as he; for they are all to be bought: but the ambition of a man of sense and honor is, to be distinguished by a character and reputation of knowledge, truth, and virtue; things which are not to be bought, and that can only be acquired by a good head and a good heart. Such was the ambition of the Lacedæmonians¹ and the Romans, when they made the greatest figure; and such, I hope, yours will always be. Adieu.

LETTER V.

ELEMENTS OF ORATORY.

BATH, November 1, 1739.

DEAR BOY,

LET us return to oratory or the art of speaking well; which should never be entirely out of your thoughts, since it is so useful in every part of life, and so absolutely necessary in most. A man can make no figure without it in Parliament, in the Church, or in the Law; and, even in common

¹ The inhabitants of Laconia, the southeastern division of the Peloponnesus, Greece. The chief city was Sparta.

conversation, a man that has acquired an easy and habitual eloquence, who speaks properly and accurately, will have a great advantage over those who speak incorrectly and inelegantly.

The business of Oratory, as I have told you before, is to persuade people; and you easily feel, that to please people is a great step towards persuading them. You must then, consequently, be sensible how advantageous it is for a man who speaks in public, whether it be in Parliament, in the Pulpit, or at the Bar (that is, in the Courts of Law), to please his hearers so much as to gain their attention, which he can never do without the help of Oratory. It is not enough to speak the language he speaks in, in its utmost purity, and according to the rules of grammar; but he must speak it elegantly; that is, he must choose the best and most expressive words, and put them in the best order. He should likewise adorn what he says, by proper metaphors, similes, and other figures of rhetoric; and he should enliven it, if he can, by quick and sprightly turns of wit. For example, suppose you had a mind to persuade Mr. Maittaire to give you a holiday, would you bluntly say to him, "Give me a holiday"? That would certainly not be the way to persuade him to do it. But you should endeavor first to please him and gain his attention by telling him that your experience of his goodness and indulgence encouraged you to ask a favor of him; that, if he should not think proper to grant it, at least you hoped he would not take it ill that you asked it. Then you should tell him what it was that you wanted; that it was a holiday; for which you should give your reasons; as, that you had such or such a thing to do, or such a place to go to. Then you might urge some argument why he should not refuse you; as, that you have seldom asked that favor, and that you seldom will; and that the mind may sometimes require a little rest from labor as well as the body. This you may illustrate by a

simile, and say, that as the bow is the stronger for being sometimes unstrung and unbent, so the mind will be capable of more attention for being now and then easy and relaxed.

This is a little oration, fit for such a little orator as you; but, however, it will make you understand what is meant by oratory and eloquence, which is to persuade. I hope you will have that talent hereafter in greater matters. . . . Adieu.

LETTER VI.

OSTRACISM AMONG THE ATHENIANS.

BATH, October 14, 1740.

DEAR BOY,

SINCE I have recommended to you to think upon subjects, and to consider things in their various lights and circumstances, I am persuaded you have made such a progress, that I shall sometimes desire your opinion upon difficult points, in order to form my own. For instance, though I have in general a great veneration for the manners and customs of the ancients, yet I am in some doubt whether the Ostracism of the Athenians was either just or prudent, and should be glad to be determined by your opinion. You know very well, that the Ostracism was the method of banishing those whose distinguished virtue made them popular, and consequently (as the Athenians thought) dangerous to the public liberty. And, if six hundred citizens of Athens gave in the name of any one Athenian written upon an oyster-shell (from whence it is called Ostracism), that man was banished from Athens for ten years. On one hand, it is certain that a free people cannot be too careful or jealous of their liberty; and it is certain, too, that the love and applause of mankind will always attend a man of eminent and distinguished virtue: and, consequently, they

are more likely to give up their liberties to such a one, than to another of less merit. But then, on the other hand, it seems extraordinary to discourage virtue upon any account, since it is only by virtue that any society can flourish and be considerable. There are many more arguments, on each side of this question, which will naturally occur to you: and, when you have considered them well, I desire you will write me your opinion whether Ostracism was a right or a wrong thing; and your reasons for being of that opinion. Let nobody help you: but give me exactly your own sentiments, and your own reasons, whatever they are. . . . Adieu.

LETTER VII.

ATTENTION TO READING. DESCRIPTION OF NIGHT.

Thursday.

DEAR BOY,

You will seldom hear from me without an admonition to think. All you learn, and all you can read, will be of little use, if you do not think and reason upon it yourself. One reads to know other people's thoughts: but if we take them upon trust, without examining and comparing them with our own, it is really living upon other people's scraps, or retailing other people's goods. To know the thoughts of others is of use, because it suggests thoughts to one's self and helps one to form a judgment; but to repeat other people's thoughts, without considering whether they are right or wrong, is the talent only of a parrot, or at most a player.

If *Night* were given you as a subject to compose upon, you should do very well to look what the best authors have said upon it, in order to help your own invention; but often you must think of it afterwards yourself, and express it in your own manner, or else you would be at best but a

plagiary. A plagiary is a man who steals other people's thoughts and puts them off for his own. You would find, for example, the following account of Night in Vergil: —

“Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem,
Corpora per terras ; sylvaeque et saeva quiêrant
Aequora ; cum media volvuntur sidera lapsu ;
Cum taret omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
Quaeque lacus latè liquidos, quaeque aspera dumis
Rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti
Lenibant curas et corda oblita laborum.”¹

Here you see the effects of night: that it brings rest to men when they are wearied with the labors of the day; that the stars move in their regular course; that flocks and birds repose themselves and enjoy the quiet of the night. This, upon examination, you would find to be all true; but then, upon consideration, too, you would find that it is not all that is to be said upon Night, and many more qualities and effects of Night would occur to you. As, for instance, though Night is in general the time of quiet and repose, yet it is often the time, too, for the commission and security of crimes, such as robberies, murders, and violations, which generally seek the advantage of darkness, as favorable for the escape of the guilty. Night, too, though it brings rest and refreshment to the innocent and virtuous, brings disquiet and horror to the guilty. The consciousness of their crimes torments them, and denies them sleep and quiet. You might, from these reflections, consider what would be the proper epithets to give to Night, as for example, if you were to represent in its most pleasing shape, as procuring quiet

¹ Translation. It was night, and wearied bodies throughout the earth were eagerly enjoying peaceful sleep; and the forests and the raging seas had become quiet. *It was a time* when the stars are rolled along in the middle of their course; when every field is still, when the flocks and many-colored birds, both far and wide, and those which inhabit the fields rough with bushes, reposing in sleep beneath the silent night, were soothing their cares and their hearts forgetful of toil.

and refreshment from labor and toil, you might call it the *friendly* Night, the *silent* Night, the *welcome* Night, the *peaceful* Night; but if, on the contrary, you were to represent it as inviting the commission of crimes, you would call it the *guilty* Night, the *conscious* Night, the *horrid* Night, with many other epithets that carry along with them the idea of horror or guilt, for an epithet, to be proper, must always be adapted (that is, suited) to the circumstances of the person or thing to which it is given. . . . Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

CIVILITY.

Wednesday.

DEAR BOY,

You behaved yourself so well at Mr. Boden's, last Sunday, that you justly deserve commendation: besides, you encourage me to give you some rules of politeness and good breeding, being persuaded that you will observe them. Know, then, that as learning, honor, and virtue are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind; politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life. Great talents, such as honor, virtue, learning, and parts, are above the generality of the world, who neither possess them themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others: but all people are judges of the lesser talents, such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and manner; because they feel the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing. Good sense must, in many cases, determine good breeding; because the same thing that would be civil at one time, and to one person, may be quite otherwise at another time, and to another person; but there are some general rules of good breeding, that hold always true, and in all cases. As, for example, it is

always extremely rude to answer only Yes, or No, to anybody, without adding Sir, my Lord, or Madam, according to the quality of the person you speak to; as, in French, you must always say, *Monsieur*, *Milord*, *Madame*, and *Mademoiselle*. I suppose you know that every married woman is, in French, *Madame*, and every unmarried one is *Mademoiselle*. It is likewise extremely rude not to give the proper attention, and a civil answer, when people speak to you; or to go away, or be doing something else, while they are speaking to you; for that convinces them that you despise them, and do not think it worth your while to hear or answer what they say. I dare say I need not tell you how rude it is to take the best place in a room, or to seize immediately upon what you like at table, without offering first to help others, as if you considered nobody but yourself. On the contrary, you should always endeavor to procure all the conveniences you can to the people you are with. Besides being civil, which is absolutely necessary, the perfection of good breeding is, to be civil with ease, and in a gentlemanlike manner. For this, you should observe the French people, who excel in it, and whose politeness seems as easy and natural as any other part of their conversation. Whereas the English are often awkward in their civilities, and, when they mean to be civil, are too much ashamed to get it out. But, pray, do you remember never to be ashamed of doing what is right; you would have a great deal of reason to be ashamed if you were not civil; but what reason can you have to be ashamed of being civil? And why not say a civil and an obliging thing as easily and as naturally as you would ask what o'clock it is? This kind of bashfulness, which is justly called, by the French, *mauvaise honte*,¹ is the distinguishing character of an English booby; who is frightened out of his wits, when people of fashion speak to him; and, when he is to answer them, blushes, stammers, can hardly get out what he would

¹ False modesty.

say, and becomes really ridiculous, from a groundless fear of being laughed at; whereas a real well-bred man would speak to all the Kings in the world, with as little concern, and as much ease, as he would speak to you.

Remember, then, that to be civil, and to be civil with ease (which is properly called good breeding), is the only way to be beloved, and well received in company; that to be ill-bred, and rude, is intolerable, and the way to be kicked out of company; and that to be bashful is to be ridiculous. As I am sure you will mind and practise all this, I expect that when you are *novennis*,¹ you will not only be the best scholar, but the best-bred boy in England of your age. Adieu.

LETTER IX.

GOOD BREEDING RECOMMENDED.

SPA,² the 25th July, N. S.³ 1741.

DEAR BOY,

I HAVE often told you in my former letters (and it is most certainly true) that the strictest and most scrupulous honor and virtue can alone make you esteemed and valued by mankind; that parts and learning can alone make you admired and celebrated by them; but that the possession of lesser talents was most absolutely necessary towards making you liked, beloved, and sought after in private life. Of these lesser talents, good breeding is the principal and most necessary one, not only as it is very important in itself, but as it adds great lustre to the more solid advantages both of

¹ Ninth year.

² Watering-place in Belgium.

³ In order to make up for the loss of time under the Julian system, Pope Gregory XIII. in 1583 suppressed ten days from the calendar. The English Parliament made the change in 1752, by enacting that September 2nd of that year should be September 14th. The new style, so called, was designated by the letters N. S. Lord Chesterfield usually retained the old style (O. S.), although he advocated the change. See Introduction, page 13.

the heart and the mind. I have often touched upon good breeding to you before, so that this letter shall be upon the next necessary qualification to it, which is a genteel, easy manner and carriage, wholly free from those odd tricks, ill habits, and awkwardnesses which even many very worthy and sensible people have in their behavior. However trifling a genteel manner may sound, it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women, which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing; and I have known many a man, from his awkwardness, give people such a dislike of him at first, that all his merit could not get the better of it afterwards. Whereas a genteel manner prepossesses people in your favor, bends them towards you, and makes them wish to like you. Awkwardness can proceed but from two causes—either from not having kept good company, or from not having attended to it. As for your keeping good company, I will take care of that; do you take care to observe their ways and manners, and to form your own upon them. Attention is absolutely necessary for this, as indeed it is for everything else, and a man without attention is not fit to live in the world. When an awkward fellow first comes into a room, it is highly probable that his sword gets between his legs and throws him down, or makes him stumble, at least. When he has recovered this accident, he goes and places himself in the very place of the whole room where he should not; there he soon lets his hat fall down, and in taking it up again throws down his cane; in recovering his cane, his hat falls a second time; so that he is a quarter of an hour before he is in order again. . . .

There is, likewise, an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings, and common proverbs; which are so many proofs of having kept bad and low company. For example; if, instead of saying that tastes are different, and that every man has his own peculiar one, you

should let off a proverb, and say, That what is one man's meat is another man's poison; or else, Every one as they like, as the good man said when he kissed his cow; everybody would be persuaded that you had never kept company with anybody above footmen and housemaids.

Attention will do all this; and without attention nothing is to be done: want of attention, which is really want of thought, is either folly or madness. You should not only have attention to everything, but a quickness of attention, so as to observe, at once, all the people in the room, their motions, their looks, and their words, and yet without staring at them, and seeming to be an observer. This quick and unobserved observation is of infinite advantage in life, and is to be acquired with care; and, on the contrary, what is called absence, which is a thoughtlessness, and want of attention about what is doing, makes a man so like either a fool or a madman, that for my part I see no real difference. A fool never has thought; a madman has lost it; and an absent man is, for the time, without it.

LETTER X.

FIRST RULES OF POLITENESS.

SPA, August 6, 1741.

DEAR BOY,

I AM very well pleased with the several performances you sent me, and still more so with Mr. Maittaire's letter, that accompanied them, in which he gives me a much better account of you than he did in his former. *Laudari a laudato viro*,¹ was always a commendable ambition; encourage that ambition, and continue to deserve the praises of the praiseworthy. While you do so, you shall have whatever you

¹ To be praised by one who is himself praised.

will from me; and when you cease to do so you shall have nothing.

I am glad you have begun to compose a little; it will give you a habit of thinking upon subjects, which is at least as necessary as reading them; therefore pray send me your thoughts upon this subject:—

“Non sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.”¹

It is a part of Cato's² character in Lucan³; who says, that Cato did not think himself born for himself only, but for all mankind. Let me know, then, whether you think that a man is born only for his own pleasure and advantage, or whether he is not obliged to contribute to the good of the society in which he lives, and of all mankind in general. This is certain, that every man receives advantages from society, which he could not have if he were the only man in the world: therefore, is he not in some measure in debt to society? and is he not obliged to do for others what they do for him? You may do this in English or Latin, which you please; for it is the thinking part, and not the language, that I mind in this case.

I warned you, in my last, against those disagreeable tricks and awkwardnesses, which many people contract when they are young, by the negligence of their parents, and cannot get quit of them when they are old; such as odd notions, strange postures, and ungenteel carriage. But there is likewise an awkwardness of the mind, that ought to be, and with care may be, avoided: as, for instance, to mistake or forget names; to speak of Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, or Mrs. Thingum, or How-d'ye-call-her, is excessively awkward and ordinary. To call people by improper titles and appellations is so too; as my Lord, for Sir; and Sir, for my Lord. To begin a

¹ Not for himself, but for the whole world did he believe he was born.

² Marcus Porcius Cato (95–46 B.C.), Roman patriot and philosopher.

³ Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39–65 A.D.), Roman poet and prose-writer.

story or narration, when you are not perfect in it, and cannot go through with it, but are forced, possibly, to say in the middle of it, "I have forgotten the rest," is very unpleasant and bungling. One must be extremely exact, clear, and perspicuous in everything one says, otherwise, instead of entertaining or informing others, one only tires and puzzles them. The voice and manner of speaking, too, are not to be neglected: some people almost shut their mouths when they speak, and mutter so that they are not to be understood; others speak so fast, and sputter, that they are not to be understood either; some always speak as loud as if they were talking to deaf people; and others so low that one cannot hear them. All these habits are awkward and disagreeable, and are to be avoided by attention: they are the distinguishing marks of the ordinary people, who have had no care taken of their education. You cannot imagine how necessary it is to mind all these little things; for I have seen many people, with great talents, ill received, for want of having these talents too; and others well received, only from their little talents and who had no great ones.

LETTER XI.

LORD ORRERY. GOOD BREEDING.

Saturday.

SIR,

THE fame of your erudition, and other shining qualifications, having reached to Lord Orrery,¹ he desired me, that you might dine with him and his son, Lord Boyle, next Sunday; which I told him you should. By this time, I suppose, you have heard from him; but, if you have not, you must, however, go there between two and three tomorrow, and say, that you come to wait upon Lord Boyle,

¹ John Boyle, fifth Earl of Cork (1707-1762).

according to his Lordship's orders, which I informed you of. As this will deprive me of the honor and pleasure of your company at dinner to-morrow, I will hope for it at breakfast, and shall take care to have your chocolate ready.

Though I need not tell one of your age, experience, and knowledge of the world, how necessary good breeding is, to recommend one to mankind; yet, as your various occupations of Greek and cricket, Latin and pitch-farthing, may possibly divert your attention from this object, I take the liberty of reminding you of it, and desiring you to be very well bred at Lord Orrery's. It is good breeding alone that can prepossess people in your favor at first sight: more time being necessary to discover greater talents. This good breeding, you know, does not consist in low bows and formal ceremony; but in an easy, civil, and respectful behavior. You will therefore take care to answer with complaisance, when you are spoken to; to place yourself at the lower end of the table, unless bid to go higher; to drink first to the Lady of the house, and next to the Master; not to eat awkwardly or dirtily; not to sit when others stand: and to do all this with an air of complaisance, and not with a grave, sour look, as if you did it all unwillingly. I do not mean a silly, insipid smile, that fools have when they would be civil; but an air of sensible good humor. I hardly know anything so difficult to attain, or so necessary to possess, as perfect good breeding, which is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. A little ceremony is often necessary; a certain degree of firmness is absolutely so; and an outward modesty is extremely becoming: the knowledge of the world, and your own observations, must, and alone can, tell you the proper quantities of each.

Mr. Fitzgerald was with me yesterday, and commended you much: go on to deserve commendations, and you will certainly meet with them. Adieu.

LETTER XII.

ATTENTION AND APPLICATION.

BATH, October 4, 1746.

DEAR BOY,

ALTHOUGH I employ so much of my time in writing to you, I confess, I have my doubts whether it is to any purpose. I know how unwelcome advice generally is. I know that those who want it most, like it and follow it least, and I know, too, that the advice of parents, more particularly, is ascribed to the moroseness, the imperiousness, or the garrulity of old age. But then, on the other hand, I flatter myself that as your own reason, though too young as yet to suggest much to you of itself, is, however, strong enough to enable you, both to judge of, and receive plain truths. I flatter myself (I say) that your own reason, young as it is, must tell you; that I can have no interest but yours in the advice I give you; and that, consequently, you will at least weigh and consider it well; in which case, some of it will, I hope, have its effect. . . .

I have so often recommended to you attention and application to whatever you learn, that I do not mention them now as duties; but I point them out to you as conducive, nay absolutely necessary to your pleasures; for can there be a greater pleasure than to be universally allowed to excel those of one's own age and manner of life? And, consequently, can there be anything more mortifying than to be excelled by them? In this latter case, your shame and regret must be greater than anybody's, because everybody knows the uncommon care which has been taken of your education, and the opportunities you have had of knowing more than others of your age. I do not define the application which I recommend singly to the view and emulation of excelling others (though that is a very sensible pleasure

and a very warrantable pride); but I mean likewise to excel in the thing itself: for, in my mind, one may as well not know a thing at all, as know it but imperfectly. To know a little of anything gives neither satisfaction nor credit; but often brings disgrace or ridicule. Mr. Pope says very truly,

“A little learning is a dang’rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian¹ spring.”

Let me, therefore, most earnestly recommend to you to hoard up, while you can, a great stock of knowledge; for though, during the dissipation of your youth, you may not have occasion to spend much of it; yet you may depend upon it, that a time will come when you will want it to maintain you. Public granaries are filled in plentiful years; not that it is known that the next, or the second, or the third year will prove a scarce one; but because it is known, that, sooner or later, such a year will come, in which the grain will be wanted.

I will say no more upon this subject: you have Mr. Harte with you to enforce it: you have reason to assent to the truth of it, so that, in short, “You have Moses and the prophets, if you will not hear them, neither will you believe, though one rose from the dead.” Do not imagine that the knowledge, which I so much recommend to you, is confined to books, pleasing, useful and necessary as that knowledge is: but I comprehend in it the great knowledge of the world, still more necessary than that of books. In truth, they assist one another reciprocally; and no man will have either perfectly, who has not both. The knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet. Books alone will never teach it you; but they will suggest many things to your observation, which might otherwise escape you; and your own observations upon mankind,

¹ Mt. Pierius in Thessaly, the abode of the Muses.

when compared with those which you will find in books, will help you to fix the true point. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

NEGLECTENCE.

BATH, October 9, O. S. 1746.

DEAR BOY,

YOUR distress in your journey from Heidelberg to Schaffhausen, your lying upon straw, your black bread, and your broken Berline,¹ are proper seasonings for the greater fatigues and distresses which you must expect in the course of your travels; and, if one had a mind to moralize, one might call them samples of the accidents, rubs, and difficulties, which every man meets with in his journey through life. In this journey, the understanding is the *voiture*² that must carry you through; and in proportion as that is stronger or weaker, more or less in repair, your journey will be better or worse; though, at best, you will now and then find some bad roads and some bad inns. Take care, therefore, to keep that necessary *voiture* in perfect good repair; examine, improve, and strengthen it every day: it is in the power, and ought to be the care, of every man to do it; he that neglects it, deserves to feel, and certainly will feel, the fatal effects of that negligence.

Apropos of negligence; I must say something to you upon that subject. — You know I have often told you, that my affection for you was not a weak, womanish one; and, far from blinding me, it makes me but more quick-sighted as to your faults: those it is not only my right, but my duty, to tell you of; and it is your duty and your interest

¹ A large four-wheeled carriage, having two seats inside and a top or hood that can be raised at will. First made in Berlin in the 17th century.

² Carriage, conveyance.

to correct them. In the strict scrutiny which I have made into you, I have (thank God) hitherto not discovered any vice of the heart, or any peculiar weakness of the head; but I have discovered laziness, inattention, and indifference; faults which are only pardonable in old men, who, in the decline of life, when health and spirits fail, have a kind of claim to that sort of tranquillity. But a young man should be ambitious to shine and excel; alert, active, and indefatigable in the means of doing it. . . . I am very sure that any man of common understanding may, by proper culture, care, attention, and labor, make himself whatever he pleases except a good poet. Your destination is the great and busy world; your immediate object is the affairs, the interests, and the history, the constitutions, the customs, and the manners of the several parts of Europe. In this any man of common sense may, by common application, be sure to excel. Ancient and Modern History are, by attention, easily attainable. Geography and Chronology the same; none of them requiring any uncommon share of genius or invention. Speaking and writing clearly, correctly, and with ease and grace, are certainly to be acquired by reading the best authors with care, and by attention to the best living models. These are the qualifications more particularly necessary for you in your department, which you may be possessed of if you please, and which, I tell you fairly, I shall be very angry at you if you are not; because, as you have the means in your hands, it will be your own fault only.

If care and application are necessary to the acquiring of those qualifications, without which you can never be considerable nor make a figure in the world, they are not less necessary with regard to the lesser accomplishments, which are requisite to make you agreeable and pleasing in society. In truth, whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and nothing can be done well without attention: I

therefore carry the necessity of attention down to the lowest things, even to dancing and dress. Custom has made dancing sometimes necessary for a young man; therefore mind it while you learn it, that you may learn to do it well, and not be ridiculous, though in a ridiculous act. Dress is of the same nature; you must dress, therefore attend to it; not in order to rival or to excel a fop in it, but in order to avoid singularity, and consequently ridicule. Take great care always to be dressed like the reasonable people of your own age, in the place where you are, whose dress is never spoken of one way or another, as either too negligent or too much studied.

What is commonly called an absent man, is commonly either a very weak or a very affected man; but be he which he will, he is, I am sure, a very disagreeable man in company. He fails in all the common offices of civility; he seems not to know those people to-day with whom yesterday he appeared to live in intimacy. He takes no part in the general conversation; but, on the contrary, breaks into it from time to time with some start of his own, as if he waked from a dream. This (as I said before) is a sure indication either of a mind so weak that it is not able to bear above one object at a time; or so affected, that it would be supposed to be wholly engrossed by, and directed to, some very great and important objects. Sir Isaac Newton,¹ Mr. Locke,² and (it may be) five or six more, since the creation of the world, may have had a right to absence, from that intense thought which the things they were investigating required. But if a young man, and a man of the world, who has no such avocations to plead, will claim and exercise that right of absence in company, his

¹ One of the most noted of English mathematicians and natural philosophers (1642-1727).

² John Locke. Distinguished English philosopher and thinker (1632-1704).

pretended right should, in my mind, be turned into an involuntary absence, by his perpetual exclusion out of company. However frivolous a company may be, still, while you are among them, do not show them, by your inattention, that you think them so; but rather take their tone, and conform in some degree to their weakness, instead of manifesting your contempt for them. There is nothing that people bear more impatiently, or forgive less, than contempt: and an injury is much sooner forgotten than an insult. If, therefore, you would rather please than offend, rather be well than ill spoken of, rather be loved than hated, remember to have that constant attention about you which flatters every man's little vanity; and the want of which, by mortifying his pride, never fails to excite his resentment, or at least his ill-will. For instance; most people (I might say all people) have their weaknesses; they have their aversions and their likings, to such and such things; so that, if you were to laugh at a man for his aversion to a cat, or cheese (which are common antipathies), or, by inattention and negligence, to let them come in his way where you could prevent it, he would, in the first case, think himself insulted, and, in the second, slighted, and would remember both. Whereas your care to procure for him what he likes, and to remove from him what he hates, shows him that he is at least an object of your attention; flatters his vanity, and makes him possibly more your friend, than a more important service would have done. With regard to women, attentions still below these are necessary, and, by the custom of the world, in some measure due, according to the laws of good breeding.

My long and frequent letters which I send you, in great doubt of their success, put me in mind of certain papers which you have very lately, and I formerly, sent up to kites, along the string, which we called messengers; some of them the wind used to blow away, others were torn by

the string, and but few of them got up and stuck to the kite. But I will content myself now, as I did then, if some of my present messengers do but stick to you. Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE COUNTRY ONE VISITS.

LONDON, December 2, O. S. 1746.

DEAR BOY,

I HAVE not, in my present situation,¹ time to write to you, either so much or so often as I used, while I was in a place of so much more leisure and profit:² but my affection for you must not be judged of by the number of my letters; and, though the one lessens, the other, I assure you, does not.

I have just now received your letter of the 25th past, N. S., and, by the former post, one from Mr. Harte, with both which I am very well pleased: with Mr. Harte's, for the good account which he gives me of you: with yours, for the good account you give me of what I desired to be informed of. Pray continue to give me further information of the form of government of the country you are now in; which I hope you will know most minutely before you leave it. The inequality of the town of Lausanne³ seems to be very convenient in this cold weather; because going up hill and down will keep you warm. — You say there is a good deal of good company; pray, are you got into it? Have you made acquaintances, and with whom? Let me know some of their names. Do you learn German yet, to read, write, and speak it?

Yesterday, I saw a letter from Monsieur Bochat,⁴ to a

¹ As Secretary of State.

² As Lord-lieutenant of Ireland.

³ City in Vaud canton, on Lake Geneva, Switzerland.

⁴ A Frenchman, an acquaintance of Chesterfield.

friend of mine, which gave me the greatest pleasure that I have felt this great while, because it gives so very good an account of you. Among other things which Monsieur Bochat says to your advantage, he mentions the tender uneasiness and concern that you showed during my illness; for which (though I will say that you owe it me) I am obliged to you; sentiments of gratitude not being universal, nor even common. As your affection for me can only proceed from your experience and conviction of my fondness for you (for to talk of natural affection is talking nonsense), the only return I desire is, what it is chiefly your interest to make me; I mean, your invariable practice of Virtue, and your indefatigable pursuit of Knowledge. Adieu! and be persuaded that I shall love you extremely while you deserve it, but not one moment longer.

LETTER XV.

VIRTUE AND COMMON SENSE.

LONDON, March 6, O. S. 1747.

DEAR BOY,

WHATEVER you do will always affect me very sensibly one way or another; and I am now most agreeably affected by two letters which I have lately seen from Lausanne, upon your subject; the one was from Madame St. Germain,¹ the other from Monsieur Pampigny¹: they both give so good an account of you, that I thought myself obliged, in justice both to them and to you, to let you know it. Those who deserve a good character ought to have the satisfaction of knowing that they have it, both as a reward and as an encouragement. They write, that you are not only *décrotté*,² but tolerably well-bred; and that the English crust of

¹ Friends of Lord Chesterfield, living in Paris.

² With the dirt rubbed off: clean.

awkward bashfulness, shyness, and roughness (of which, by the by, you had your share), is pretty well rubbed off. I am most heartily glad of it; for, as I have often told you, those lesser talents, of an engaging, insinuating manner, an easy good breeding, a genteel behavior and address, are of infinitely more advantage than they are generally thought to be, especially here in England. Virtue and learning, like gold, have their intrinsic value; but if they are not polished, they certainly lose a great deal of their lustre: and even polished brass will pass upon more people than rough gold. What a number of sins does the cheerful, easy, good breeding of the French frequently cover! Many of them want common sense, many more common learning; but in general they make up so much by their manner for those defects, that frequently they pass undiscovered. I have often said, and do think, that a Frenchman, who, with a fund of virtue, learning, and good sense, has the manners and good breeding of his country, is the perfection of human nature. This perfection you may, if you please, and I hope you will, arrive at. You know what virtue is: you may have it if you will; it is in every man's power; and miserable is the man who has it not. Good sense God has given you. Learning you already possess enough of, to have, in a reasonable time, all that a man need have. With this you are thrown out early into the world, where it will be your own fault if you do not acquire all the other accomplishments necessary to complete and adorn your character. You will do well to make your compliments to Madame St. Germain and Monsieur Pampigny, and tell them how sensible you are of their partiality to you, in the advantageous testimonies which, you are informed, they have given of you here.

Adieu! Continue to deserve such testimonies, and then you will not only deserve, but enjoy, my truest affection.

LETTER XVI.

ATTENTION TO DRESS.

LONDON, April 3, O. S. 1747.

DEAR BOY,

IF I am rightly informed, I am now writing to a fine Gentleman, in a scarlet coat laced with gold, a brocade waistcoat, and all other suitable ornaments. The natural partiality of every author for his own works, makes me very glad to hear that Mr. Harte has thought this last edition of mine worth so fine a binding; and as he has bound it in red and gilt it upon the back, I hope he will take care that it shall be *lettered* too. A showish binding attracts the eyes, and engages the attention of everybody; but with this difference, that women, and men who are like women, mind the binding more than the book; whereas men of sense and learning immediately examine the inside; and if they find that it does not answer the finery on the outside, they throw it by with the greater indignation and contempt. I hope that when this edition of my works shall be opened and read, the best judges will find connection, consistency, solidity, and spirit in it. Mr. Harte may *recensere*¹ and *emendare*² as much as he pleases, but it will be to little purpose if you do not coöperate with him. The work will be imperfect.

I thank you for your last information of our success in the Mediterranean; and you say, very rightly, that a Secretary of State ought to be well informed. I hope, therefore, you will take care that I shall. You are near the busy scene in Italy: and I doubt not but that, by frequently looking at the map, you have all that theatre of the war very perfect in your mind.

¹ To revive.² To amend.

I like your account of the salt works; which shows that you gave some attention while you were seeing them. But, notwithstanding that, by your account, the Swiss salt is (I dare say) very good, yet I am apt to suspect that it falls a little short of the true Attic salt,¹ in which there was a peculiar quickness and delicacy. That same Attic salt seasoned almost all Greece, except Bœotia; and a great deal of it was exported afterwards to Rome, where it was counterfeited by a composition called Urbanity, which in some time was brought to very near the perfection of the original Attic salt. The more you are powdered with these two kinds of salt, the better you will keep, and the more you will be relished. Adieu!

LETTER XVII.

COURT OF MUNICH.

LONDON, August 7, O. S. 1747.

DEAR BOY,

I RECKON that this letter has but a bare chance of finding you at Lausanne; but I was resolved to risk it, as it is the last that I shall write to you till you are settled at Leipsic. I sent you by the last post, under cover to Mr. Harte, a letter of recommendation to one of the first people at Munich; which you will take care to present to him in the politest manner: he will certainly have you presented to the Electoral family; and I hope you will go through that ceremony with great respect, good breeding, and ease. As this is the first Court that ever you will have been at, take care to inform yourself, if there be any particular customs or forms to be observed, that you may not commit any mistake. At Vienna, men always make courtesies, instead of bows, to

¹ Delicate, refined, subtle wit, especially applicable to the people of Athens, chief city of Attica, one of the divisions of Greece.

the Emperor ; in France, nobody bows at all to the King, nor kisses his hand ; but in Spain and England, bows are made, and hands are kissed. Thus every Court has some peculiarity or other, which those who go to them ought previously to inform themselves of, to avoid blunders and awkwardnesses.

I have not time to say any more now, than to wish you a good journey to Leipsic ; and great attention, both there and in going thither. Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

CAUTION IN MAKING FRIENDS.

LONDON, October 9, O. S. 1747.

DEAR BOY,

PEOPLE of your age have commonly an unguarded frankness about them, which makes them the easy prey and bubbles of the artful and the experienced : they look upon every knave, or fool, who tells them that he is their friend, to be really so ; and pay that profession of simulated friendship with an indiscreet and unbounded confidence, always to their loss, often to their ruin. Beware, therefore, now that you are coming into the world, of these proffered friendships. Receive them with great civility, but with great incredulity, too ; and pay them with compliments, but not with confidence. Do not let your vanity and self-love make you suppose that people become your friends at first sight, or even upon a short acquaintance. Real friendship is a slow growth ; and never thrives, unless ingrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit. There is another kind of nominal friendship, among young people, which is warm for the time, but, by good luck, of short duration. This friendship is hastily produced by their being accidentally thrown together, and pursuing the same course of riot and

debauchery. A fine friendship, truly ! and well cemented by drunkenness and lewdness. It should rather be called a conspiracy against morals and good manners, and be punished as such by the civil Magistrate. However, they have the impudence and the folly to call this confederacy a friendship. They lend one another money for bad purposes ; they engage in quarrels, offensive and defensive, for their accomplices ; they tell one another all they know, and often more, too ; when, of a sudden, some accident disperses them, and they think no more of each other, unless it be to betray and laugh at their imprudent confidence. Remember to make a great difference between companions and friends ; for a very complaisant and agreeable companion may, and often does, prove a very improper and a very dangerous friend. People will, in a great degree, and not without reason, form their opinion of you upon that which they have of your friends ; and there is a Spanish proverb, which says very justly, *Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are.* One may fairly suppose that a man who makes a knave or a fool his friend, has something very bad to do, or to conceal. But, at the same time that you carefully decline the friendship of knaves and fools, if it can be called friendship, there is no occasion to make either of them your enemies, wantonly and unprovoked ; for they are numerous bodies ; and I would rather choose a secure neutrality, than alliance or war, with either of them. You may be a declared enemy to their vices and follies, without being marked out by them as a personal one. Their enmity is the next dangerous thing to their friendship. Have a real reserve with almost everybody ; and have a seeming reserve with almost nobody ; for it is very disagreeable to seem reserved, and very dangerous not to be so. Few people find the true medium ; many are ridiculously mysterious and reserved upon trifles ; and many imprudently communicative of all they know.

The next thing to the choice of your friends is the choice

of your company. Endeavor, as much as you can, to keep company with people above you. There you rise, as much as you sink with people below you; for (as I have mentioned before) you are whatever the company you keep is. Do not mistake, when I say company above you, and think that I mean with regard to their birth; that is the least consideration: but I mean with regard to their merit, and the light in which the world considers them.

There are two sorts of good company; one which is called the *beau monde*,¹ and consists of those people who have the lead in Courts, and in the gay part of life; the other consists of those who are distinguished by some peculiar merit, or who excel in some particular and valuable art or science. For my own part, I used to think myself in company as much above me, when I was with Mr. Addison² and Mr. Pope,³ as if I had been with all the princes in Europe. What I mean by low company, which should by all means be avoided, is the company of those who, absolutely insignificant and contemptible in themselves, think they are honored by being in your company, and who flatter every vice and every folly you have, in order to engage you to converse with them. The pride of being the first of the company is but too common; but it is very silly, and very prejudicial. Nothing in the world lets down a character more than that wrong turn.

You may possibly ask me whether a man has it always in his power to get into the best company? and how? I say, Yes, he has, by deserving it; provided he is but in circumstances which enable him to appear upon the footing of a gentleman. Merit and good breeding will make their way everywhere. Knowledge will introduce him, and good breeding will endear him to the best companies; for, as I

¹ The fashionable world.

² Joseph Addison (1672-1719). Noted English essayist, poet, statesman.

³ Alexander Pope (1688-1744). Famous English poet.

have often told you, politeness and good breeding are absolutely necessary to adorn any or all other good qualities or talents. Without them, no knowledge, no perfection whatsoever, is seen in its best light. The Scholar, without good breeding, is a Pedant; the Philosopher, a Cynic; the Soldier, a Brute; and every man disagreeable.

I long to hear from my several correspondents at Leipsic, of your arrival there, and what impression you make on them at first; for I have Arguses,¹ with a hundred eyes each, who will watch you narrowly, and relate to me faithfully. My accounts will certainly be true; it depends upon you entirely of what kind they shall be. Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

FITTING ONE'S SELF FOR PUBLIC LIFE.

LONDON, January 15, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I WILLINGLY accept the New Year's gift which you promise me for next year; and the more valuable you make it, the more thankful I shall be. That depends entirely upon you; and therefore I hope to be presented every year with a new edition of you, more correct than the former, and considerably enlarged and amended.

Since you do not care to be an Assessor of the Imperial Chamber, and desire an establishment in England, what do you think of being Greek Professor at one of our Universities? It is a very pretty sinecure, and requires very little knowledge (much less than, I hope, you have already) of that language. If you do not approve of this, I am at a loss to know what else to propose to you; and therefore desire that you will inform me what sort of destination you propose

¹ In Greek legend, Argus, guardian of Io, was famed as having had one hundred eyes. Slain by Hermes.

for yourself: for it is now time to fix it, and to take our measures accordingly. Mr. Harte tells me, that you set up for a Πολιτικός ανηρ;¹ if so, I presume it is in the view of succeeding me in my office; which I will very willingly resign to you, whenever you shall call upon me for it. But, if you intend to be the Πολιτικός or the Βουλευτικός ανηρ² there are some trifling circumstances upon which you should previously take your resolution. The first of which is, to be fit for it; and then, in order to be so, make yourself master of Ancient and Modern History, and Languages. To know perfectly the constitution and form of government of every nation; the growth and the decline of ancient and modern Empires; and to trace out and reflect upon the causes of both; to know the strength, the riches, and the commerce of every country. These little things, trifling as they may seem, are very necessary for a Politician to know; and which therefor, I presume, you will condescend to apply yourself to. There are some additional qualifications necessary in the practical part of business, which may deserve some consideration in your leisure moments; such as an absolute command of your temper, so as not to be provoked to passion upon any account: Patience to hear frivolous, impertinent, and unreasonable applications; with address enough to refuse, without offending; or by your manner of granting, to double the obligation: Dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie: Sagacity enough to read other people's countenances: and Serenity enough not to let them discover anything by yours; a seeming frankness, with a real reserve. These are the rudiments of a Politician; the world must be your grammar.

Three mails are now due from Holland; so that I have no letters from you to acknowledge. I therefore conclude with recommending myself to your favor and protection, when you succeed,

Yours.

¹ A man fitted for state affairs.

² A man wise in counsel.

LETTER XX.

IDLENESS. OBSERVATION.

BATH, February 16, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

THE first use that I made of my liberty was to come hither, where I arrived yesterday. My health though not fundamentally bad, yet for want of proper attention of late wanted some repairs, which these waters never fail giving it. I shall drink them a month, and return to London, there to enjoy the comforts of social life, instead of groaning under the load of business. I have given the description of the life that I propose to lead for the future, in this motto, which I have put up in the frieze of my library in my new house :

*“Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus horis
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.”*¹

I must observe to you, upon this occasion, that the uninterrupted satisfaction which I expect to find in that library, will be chiefly owing to my having employed some part of my life well at your age. I wish I had employed it better, and my satisfaction would now be complete; but, however, I planted, while young, that degree of knowledge which is now my refuge and my shelter. Make your plantations still more extensive, they will more than pay you for your trouble. I do not regret the time that I passed in pleasures; they were seasonable, they were the pleasures of youth, and I enjoyed them while young. If I had not, I should probably have overvalued them now, as we are very apt to do what we do not know: but, knowing

¹ Now in the books of the ancients, now in sleep, and in idle hours to enjoy the delightful forgetfulness of an anxious life.

—Horace, “Satires,” II. 6. 62.

them as I do, I know their real value, and how much they are generally overrated. Nor do I regret the time that I have passed in business, for the same reason; those who see only the outside of it imagine that it has hidden charms, which they pant after; and nothing but acquaintance can undeceive them. I, who have been behind the scenes, both of pleasure and business, and have seen all the springs and pulleys of those decorations which astonish and dazzle the audience, retire, not only without regret, but with contentment and satisfaction. But what I do and ever shall regret, is the time which, while young, I lost in mere idleness and in doing nothing. This is the common effect of the inconsideracy of youth, against which I beg you will be most carefully upon your guard. The value of moments, when cast up, is immense, if well employed; if thrown away, their loss is irrecoverable. Every moment may be put to some use, and that with much more pleasure than if unemployed. Do not imagine that, by the employment of time, I mean an uninterrupted application to serious studies. No; pleasures are, at proper times, both as necessary and as useful: they fashion and form you for the world; they teach you characters, and show you the human heart in its unguarded minutes. But, then, remember to make that use of them. I have known many people, from laziness of mind, go through both pleasure and business with equal inattention; neither enjoying the one, nor doing the other; thinking themselves men of pleasure, because they were mingled with those who were; and men of business, because they had business to do, though they did not do it. Whatever you do, do it to the purpose; do it thoroughly, not superficially. *Approfondissez*¹; go to the bottom of things. Anything half done, or half known, is, in my mind, neither done nor known at all. Nay worse, for it often misleads. There is hardly any place, or any

¹ Examine thoroughly.

company, where you may not gain knowledge if you please; almost everybody knows some one thing, and is glad to talk upon that one thing. Seek and you will find, in this world as well as in the next. See everything, inquire into everything; and you may excuse your curiosity, and the questions you ask, which otherwise might be thought impertinent, by your manner of asking them; for most things depend a great deal upon the manner. As, for example, *I am afraid that I am very troublesome with my questions; but nobody can inform me so well as you; or something of that kind.*

Now that you are in a Lutheran country, go to their churches, and observe the manner of their public worship; attend to their ceremonies, and inquire the meaning and intention of every one of them. And, as you will soon understand German well enough, attend to their sermons, and observe their manner of preaching. Inform yourself of their church government, whether it resides in the Sovereign, or in Consistories and Synods. Whence arises the maintenance of their Clergy; whether from tithes, as in England, or from voluntary contributions, or from pensions from the State. Do the same thing when you are in Roman Catholic countries; go to their churches, see all their ceremonies, ask the meaning of them, get the terms explained to you. As, for instance, Prime, Tierce, Sexte, Nones, Matins, Angelus, High Mass, Vespers, Complies, etc. Inform yourself of their several religious Orders, their Founders, their Rules, their Vows, their Habits, their Revenues, etc. But when you frequent places of public worship, as I would have you go to all the different ones you meet with, remember that however erroneous, they are none of them objects of laughter and ridicule. Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed. The object of all the public worships in the world is the same; it is that great eternal Being, who created everything. The different manners of

worship are by no means subjects of ridicule. Each sect thinks its own the best; and I know no infallible judge in this world to decide which is the best. Make the same inquiries, wherever you are, concerning the revenues, the military establishment, the trade, the commerce, and the police of every country. And you would do well to keep a blank paper book, which the Germans call an *Album* : and there, instead of desiring, as they do, every fool they meet with to scribble something, write down all these things as soon as they come to your knowledge from good authorities.

I had almost forgotten one thing which I would recommend as an object for your curiosity and information, that is, the Administration of Justice; which, as it is always carried on in open Court, you may, and I would have you, go and see it with attention and inquiry.

I have now but one anxiety left which is concerning you. I would have you be, what I know nobody is, perfect. As that is impossible, I would have you as near perfection as possible. I know nobody in a fairer way towards it than yourself if you please. Never were so much pains taken for anybody's education as for yours; and never had anybody those opportunities of knowledge and improvement which you have had and still have. I hope, I wish, I doubt, and I fear alternately. This only I am sure of, that you will prove either the greatest pain or the greatest pleasure of

Yours.

LETTER XXI.

USE AND ABUSE OF LEARNING.

BATH, February 22, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

EVERY excellency, and every virtue, has its kindred vice or weakness; and if carried beyond certain bounds,

sinks into the one or the other. Generosity often runs into profusion, economy into avarice, courage into rashness, caution into timidity, and so on:—insomuch that, I believe, there is more judgment required for the proper conduct of our virtues, than for avoiding their opposite vices. Vice, in its true light, is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight; and would hardly ever seduce us, if it did not at first wear the mask of some virtue. But virtue is in itself so beautiful, that it charms us at first sight; engages us more and more, upon further acquaintance; and, as with other beauties, we think excess impossible: it is here that judgment is necessary to moderate and direct the effects of an excellent cause. I shall apply this reasoning, at present, not to any particular virtue, but to an excellency, which for want of judgment is often the cause of ridiculous and blamable effects; I mean, great learning, which, if not accompanied with sound judgment, frequently carries us into error, pride, and pedantry. As I hope you will possess that excellency in its utmost extent, and yet without its too common failings, the hints which my experience can suggest may probably not be useless to you.

Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to decide, and give judgment without appeal. The consequence of which is, that mankind, provoked by the insult, and injured by the oppression, revolt; and in order to shake off the tyranny, even call the lawful authority in question. The more you know, the modester you should be: and (by the by) that modesty is the surest way of gratifying your vanity. Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful: represent, but do not pronounce; and if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

Others, to show their learning, or often from the prejudices of a school education, where they hear of nothing else, are always talking of the Ancients as something more than men, and of the Moderns as something less. They

are never without a Classic or two in their pockets; they stick to the old good sense; they read none of the modern trash; and will show you plainly that no improvement has been made in any one art or science these last seventeen hundred years. I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the Ancients; but still less would I have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the Moderns without contempt, and of the Ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their ages; and if you happen to have an Elzevir¹ classic in your pocket, neither show it nor mention it.

Some great scholars most absurdly draw all their maxims, both for public and private life, from what they call Parallel Cases in the ancient authors; without considering, that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel: and, in the next place, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any historian, with every one of its circumstances; which, however, ought to be known, in order to be reasoned from. Reason upon the case itself and the several circumstances that attend it, and act accordingly: but not from the authority of ancient poets or historians. Take into your consideration, if you please, cases seemingly analogous; but take them as helps only, not as guides. We are really so prejudiced by our educations, that, as the Ancients deified their heroes, we deify their madmen: of which, with all due regard to antiquity, I take Leonidas² and Curtius³ to have been two

¹ Famous Dutch family, publishers of classic authors, — Latin, Greek, French, German, etc.

² Greek hero, King of Sparta, killed at Thermopylæ, 480 B.C.

³ Marcus Curtius, legendary Roman hero, who while mounted jumped into a chasm in the forum, caused by an earthquake. The chasm at once closed, thus fulfilling the promise of the soothsayers, that only by the sacrifice of Rome's greatest treasure could this be accomplished.

distinguished ones. And yet a stolid pedant would, in a speech in Parliament, relative to a tax of twopence in the pound, upon some commodity or other, quote those two heroes, as examples of what we ought to do and suffer for our country. I have known these absurdities carried so far, by people of injudicious learning, that I should not be surprised, if some of them were to propose, while we are at war with the Gauls, that a number of geese should be kept in the Tower, upon account of the infinite advantage which Rome received, *in a parallel case*, from a certain number of geese in the Capitol.¹ This way of reasoning, and this way of speaking, will always form a poor politician, and a puerile declaimer.

There is another species of learned men, who, though less dogmatical and supercilious, are not less impertinent. These are the communicative and shining Pedants, who adorn their conversation, even with women, by happy quotations of Greek and Latin, and who have contracted such a familiarity with the Greek and Roman authors, that they call them by certain names or epithets denoting intimacy. As *old* Homer; that *sly rogue* Horace²; *Maro*,³ instead of Vergil; and *Naso*,⁴ instead of Ovid. These are often imitated by coxcombs who have no learning at all, but who have got some names and some scraps of ancient authors by heart, which they improperly and impertinently retail in all companies, in hopes of passing for scholars. If, therefore, you would avoid the accusation of pedantry, on the one hand,

¹ In their attack upon Rome (390 B.C.) the Gauls scaled the steep and rocky slopes of the Capitoline Hill unobserved by the sentinels and the watch-dogs. The alarm was given by geese whose cackling aroused Manlius. With a small force hastily summoned he repelled the invaders and saved the city.

² Quintus Horatius Flaccus. Famous Roman lyric poet (65-8 B.C.).

³ Publius Vergilius Maro, Roman epic poet (70-19 B.C.).

⁴ Publius Ovidius Naso, Roman poet, one of the leading writers of the Augustan Age (43 B.C.-18 A.D.).

or the suspicion of ignorance, on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company that you are in; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out, and strike it, merely to show that you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

Upon the whole, remember that learning (I mean Greek and Roman learning) is a most useful and necessary ornament, which it is shameful not to be master of; but at the same time most carefully avoid those errors and abuses which I have mentioned, and which too often attend it. Remember, too, that great modern knowledge is still more necessary than ancient; and that you had better know perfectly the present than the old state of Europe; though I would have you well acquainted with both.

I have this moment received your letter of the 17th, N. S. Though, I confess, there is no great variety in your present manner of life, yet materials can never be wanting for a letter; you see, you hear, or you read, something new every day; a short account of which, with your own reflections thereupon, will make out a letter very well. But, since you desire a subject, pray send me an account of the Lutheran¹ establishment in Germany; their religious tenets, their church government, the maintenance, authority, and titles of their Clergy.

Vittorio Siri, complete, is a very scarce and very dear book here; but I do not want it. If your own library grows too voluminous, you will not know what to do with it, when you leave Leipsic. Your best way will be, when you go away from thence, to send to England, by Hamburg, all the books that you do not absolutely want. Yours.

¹ The Protestant church which was founded by Martin Luther about 1522.

LETTER XXII.

THE GRACES.

BATH, March 9, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I MUST, from time to time, remind you of what I have often recommended to you, and of what you cannot attend to too much; *sacrifice to the Graces*. The different effects of the same things, said or done, when accompanied or abandoned by them, is almost inconceivable. They prepare the way to the heart; and the heart has such an influence over the understanding, that it is worth while to engage it in our interest. It is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else; and it has so much to say, even with men, and the ablest men too, that it commonly triumphs in every struggle with the understanding. Monsieur de Rochefoucault in his Maxims, says, that *l'esprit est souvent la dupe du cœur*.¹ If he had said, instead of *souvent*, *presque toujours*,² I fear he would have been nearer the truth. This being the case, aim at the heart. Intrinsic merit alone will not do: it will gain you the general esteem of all; but not the particular affection, that is, the heart, of any. To engage the affection of any particular person, you must, over and above your general merit, have some particular merit to that person; by services done or offered; by expressions of regard and esteem; by complaisance, attentions, etc., for him: and the graceful manner of doing all these things opens the way to the heart, and facilitates, or rather insures, their effects. From your own observation, reflect what a disagreeable impression an awkward address, a slovenly figure, an ungraceful manner of speaking, whether stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling, an unattentive

¹ The mind is often the victim of the heart.² Often, almost always.

behavior, etc., make upon you, at first sight, in a stranger, and how they prejudice you against him, though, for aught you know, he may have great intrinsic sense and merit. And reflect, on the other hand, how much the opposites of all these things prepossess you at first sight in favor of those who enjoy them. You wish to find all good qualities in them, and are in some degree disappointed if you do not. A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this *je ne sais quoi*,¹ that always pleases. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, an harmonious voice, something open and cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking: all these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing *je ne sais quoi*, which everybody feels, though nobody can describe. Observe carefully, then, what displeases or pleases you in others, and be persuaded that in general the same things will please or displease them in you. Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it: and I could heartily wish, that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh, while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anybody laugh; they are above it: they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that 'is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon the floor for want of one, sets a whole company a laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a

¹ I know not what.

plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection, but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition; and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. Many people, at first from awkwardness and *mauvaise honte*,¹ have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak: and I know a man of very good parts, Mr. Waller, who cannot say the commonest thing without laughing; which makes those who do not know him, take him at first for a natural fool. This and many other very disagreeable habits are owing to *mauvaise honte*¹ at their first setting out in the world. They are ashamed in company, and so disconcerted that they do not know what they do, and try a thousand tricks to keep themselves in countenance; which tricks afterwards grow habitual to them. Some scratch their head, others twirl their hats; in short, every awkward, ill-bred body has his trick. But the frequency does not justify the thing; and all these vulgar habits and awkwardness, though not criminal indeed, are most carefully to be guarded against, as they are great bars in the way of the art of pleasing. Remember, that to please is almost to prevail, or at least a necessary previous step to it. You, who have your fortune to make, should more particularly study this art. You had not, I must tell you, when you left England, *les manières prévenantes*; ² and I must confess they are not very common in England: but I hope that your good sense will make you acquire them abroad. If you desire to make yourself considerable in the world (as, if you have any spirit, you do) it

¹ Bashfulness.

² Prepossessing manners.

must be entirely your own doing: for I may very possibly be out of the world at the time you come into it. Your own rank and fortune will not assist you; your merit and your manners can alone raise you to figure and fortune. I have laid the foundations of them by the education which I have given you; but you must build the superstructure yourself. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

FRUITS OF MENTAL CULTURE.

LONDON, April 1, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I HAVE not received any letter, either from you or from Mr. Harte, these three posts, which I impute wholly to accidents between this place and Leipsic; and they are distant enough to admit of many. I always take it for granted that you are well when I do not hear to the contrary; besides, as I have often told you, I am much more anxious about your doing well, than about your being well; and when you do not write I will suppose that you are doing something more useful. Your health will continue while your temperance continues; and at your age nature takes sufficient care of the body, provided she is left to herself, and that intemperance on one hand, or medicines on the other, do not break in upon her. But it is by no means so with the mind, which at your age particularly requires great and constant care, and some physic. Every quarter of an hour well or ill employed, will do it essential and lasting good or harm. It requires also a great deal of exercise to bring it to a state of health and vigor. Observe the difference there is between minds cultivated and minds uncultivated, and you will, I am sure, think that you cannot take too much pains, nor employ too much of your time, in the culture of your own. A drayman is probably born with as good organs as Milton,

Locke, or Newton; but by culture they are much more above him than he is above his horse. Sometimes, indeed, extraordinary geniuses have broken out by the force of nature without the assistance of education; but those instances are too rare for anybody to trust to; and even they would make a much greater figure if they had the advantage of education into the bargain. If Shakespeare's genius had been cultivated, those beauties, which we so justly admire in him, would have been undisgraced by those extravagancies, and that nonsense, with which they are frequently accompanied. People are in general what they are made, by education and company, from fifteen to five-and-twenty; consider well, therefore, the importance of your next eight or nine years; your whole depends upon them. I will tell you sincerely my hopes and my fears concerning you. I think you will be a good scholar, and that you will acquire a considerable stock of knowledge of various kinds; but I fear that you neglect what are called little, though in truth they are very material, things; I mean a gentleness of manners, an engaging address, and an insinuating behavior: they are real and solid advantages, and none but those who do not know the world, treat them as trifles. I am told that you speak very quick, and not distinctly; this is a most ungraceful and disagreeable trick, which you know I have told you of a thousand times; pray attend carefully to the correction of it. An agreeable and distinct manner of speaking adds greatly to the matter; and I have known many a very good speech unregarded upon account of the disagreeable manner in which it has been delivered, and many an indifferent one applauded, for the contrary reason. Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

AWKWARDNESS AT COURT.

LONDON, May 17, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I RECEIVED, yesterday, your letter of the 16th, N. S., and have, in consequence of it, written this day to Sir Charles Williams, to thank him for all the civilities he has shown you. Your first setting out at Court has, I find, been very favorable; and his Polish Majesty has distinguished you. I hope you received that mark of distinction with respect and with steadiness, which is the proper behavior of a man of fashion. People of a low, obscure education, cannot stand the rays of greatness; they are frightened out of their wits when kings and great men speak to them; they are awkward, ashamed, and do not know what nor how to answer: whereas *les honnêtes gens*¹ are not dazzled by superior rank: they know and pay all the respect that is due to it; but they do it without being disconcerted; and can converse just as easily with a king as with any one of his subjects. This is the great advantage of being introduced young into good company, and being used early to converse with one's superiors. How many men have I seen here, who, after having had the full benefit of an English education, first at school, and then at the university, when they have been presented to the King, did not know whether they stood upon their heads or their heels? If the king spoke to them, they were annihilated; they trembled, endeavored to put their hands in their pockets and missed them, let their hats fall, and were ashamed to take them up; and, in short, put themselves in every attitude but the right, that is, the easy and natural one. The characteristic of a well-bred man is, to converse with his inferiors without insolence, and with his

¹ Respectable people.

superiors with respect and with ease. He talks to kings without concern; he trifles with women of the first condition, with familiarity, gaiety, but respect; and converses with his equals, whether he is acquainted with them or not, upon general, common topics, that are not, however, quite frivolous, without the least concern of mind, or awkwardness of body: neither of which can appear to advantage, but when they are perfectly easy.

The tea-things which Sir Charles Williams has given you, I would have you make a present of to your Mamma, and send them to her by Duval, when he returns. You owe her, not only duty, but likewise great obligations, for her care and tenderness; and consequently cannot take too many opportunities of showing your gratitude.

I am impatient to receive your account of Dresden, and likewise your answers to the many questions that I asked you.

Adieu for this time, and God bless you!

LETTER XXV.

GOOD MANNERS.

LONDON, July 1, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I AM extremely well pleased with the course of studies which Mr. Harte informs me you are now in, and with the degree of application which he assures me you have to them. It is your interest to do so, as the advantage will be all your own. My affection for you makes me both wish and endeavor that you may turn out well; and according as you do turn out, I shall be either proud or ashamed of you. But as to mere interest, in the common acceptance of that word, it would be mine that you should turn out ill; for you may depend upon it that whatever you have from me shall be most exactly proportioned to your desert. Deserve a great

deal, and you shall have a great deal; deserve little, and you shall have but a little; and be good for nothing at all, and, I assure you, you shall have nothing at all.

Solid knowledge, as I have often told you, is the first and great foundation of your future fortune and character: for I never mention to you the two much greater points of religion and morality, because I cannot possibly suspect you as to either of them. This solid knowledge you are in a fair way of acquiring; you may if you please; and I will add, that nobody ever had the means of acquiring it more in their power than you have. But remember that manners must adorn knowledge, and smooth its way through the world. Like a great rough diamond, it may do very well in a closet by way of curiosity, and also for its intrinsic value; but it will never be worn, nor shine if it is not polished. It is upon this article, I confess, that I suspect you the most, which makes me recur to it so often; for I fear that you are apt to show too little attention to everybody, and too much contempt to many. Be convinced, that there are no persons so insignificant and inconsiderable but may, some time or other, and in something or other, have it in their power to be of use to you, which they certainly will not if you have once shown them contempt. Wrongs are often forgiven, but contempt never is, our pride remembers it for ever, it implies a discovery of weaknesses which we are much more careful to conceal than crimes. Many a man will confess his crimes to a common friend, but I never knew a man who would tell his silly weaknesses to his most intimate one; as many a friend will tell us our faults without reserve, who will not so much as hint at our follies. That discovery is too mortifying to our self-love, either to tell another, or to be told of one's self. You must therefore never expect to hear of your weaknesses or your follies from anybody but me; those I will take pains to discover, and whenever I do shall tell you of them. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXVI.

TWO SORTS OF UNDERSTANDINGS.

LONDON, July 26, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

THERE are two sorts of understandings; one of which hinders a man from ever being considerable, and the other commonly makes him ridiculous; I mean the lazy mind, and the trifling, frivolous mind. Yours, I hope, is neither. The lazy mind will not take the trouble of going to the bottom of anything; but, discouraged by the first difficulties, (and everything worth knowing or having is attended with some,) stops short, contents itself with easy, and consequently, superficial knowledge, and prefers a great degree of ignorance to a small degree of trouble. These people either think, or represent most things as impossible; whereas few things are so, to industry and activity. But difficulties seem to them impossibilities or at least they pretend to think them so, by way of excuse for their laziness. An hour's attention to the same object is too laborious for them; they take everything in the light in which it first presents itself, never consider it in all its different views; and, in short, never think it through. The consequence of this is, that, when they come to speak upon these subjects before people who have considered them with attention, they only discover their own ignorance and laziness, and lay themselves open to answers that put them in confusion. Do not then be discouraged by the first difficulties, but *contra audentior ito*¹; and resolve to go to the bottom of all those things which every gentleman ought to know well. Those arts or sciences, which are peculiar to certain professions, need not be deeply known by those who are not intended for those professions. . . . But those things which every gentleman, independently of profession, should know, he ought to know

¹ On the other hand, go forward more boldly.

well, and dive into all the depths of them. Such as languages, history, and geography, ancient and modern ; philosophy, rational logic, rhetoric, and, for you particularly, the constitutions and the civil and military state of every country in Europe. This, I confess, is a pretty large circle of knowledge, attended with some difficulties, and requiring some trouble, which, however, an active and industrious mind will overcome, and be amply repaid. The trifling and frivolous mind is always busied, but to little purpose ; it takes little objects for great ones, and throws away upon trifles that time and attention, which only important things deserve. . . .

Read only useful books ; and never quit a subject till you are thoroughly master of it, but read and inquire on till then. When you are in company, bring the conversation to some useful subject, but *à portée*¹ of that company. Points of history, matters of literature, the customs of particular countries, the several orders of Knighthood, as Teutonic,² Maltese,³ etc., are surely better subjects of conversation than the weather, dress, or fiddle-faddle stories, that carry no information along with them. The characters of kings and great men are only to be learned in conversation, for they are never fairly written during their lives. This, therefore, is an entertaining and instructive subject of conversation and will likewise give you an opportunity of observing how very differently characters are given from the different passions and views of those who give them. Never be ashamed nor afraid of asking questions ; for if they lead to information and if you accompany them with some excuse, you will

¹ Within the capacity.

² A military order founded at Acre, Palestine, in 1190. Its purpose was to care for the sick and wounded pilgrims and to defend the sacred soil of the Holy Land.

³ A company of monks, originating in the Holy Land, who founded a church and a hospital in Jerusalem. A military organization was perfected in the 12th century.

never be reckoned an impertinent or rude questioner. All those things in the common course of life depend entirely upon the manner; and in that respect the vulgar saying is true, "That one man may better steal a horse, than another look over the hedge." . . .

I am very glad that Mr. Lyttelton approved of my new house, and particularly of my *Canonical*¹ pillars. My bust of Cicero is a very fine one, and well preserved; it will have the best place in my library, unless, at your return, you bring me over as good a modern head of your own; which I should like still better. I can tell you that I shall examine it as attentively as ever antiquary did an old one.

LETTER XXVII.

GOOD COMPANY.

BATH, October 12, 1748.

DEAR BOY,

. . . . To keep good company, especially at your first setting out, is the way to receive good impressions. If you ask me what I mean by good company, I will confess to you that it is pretty difficult to define; but I will endeavor to make you understand it as well as I can.

Good company is not what respective sets of company are pleased either to call or think themselves, but it is that company which all the people of the place call and acknowledge to be good company, notwithstanding some objections which they may form to some of the individuals who compose it. It consists chiefly (but by no means without exception) of people of considerable birth, rank, and character, for people of neither birth nor rank are frequently, and very justly, admitted into it, if distinguished by any peculiar merit, or eminency in any liberal art or science. Nay, so

¹ A pun : the author placed in his house pillars from Canons, in Middlesex.

motley a thing is good company, that many people, without birth, rank, or merit, intrude into it by their own forwardness, and others slide into it by the protection of some considerable person, and some even of indifferent characters and morals make part of it. But in the main, the good part preponderates, and people of infamous and blasted characters are never admitted. In this fashionable good company, the best manners and the best language of the place are most unquestionably to be learnt; for they establish and give the tone to both, which are therefore called the language and manners of good company, there being no legal tribunal to ascertain either.

A company consisting wholly of people of the first qualities cannot, for that reason, be called good company, in the common acceptation of the phrase, unless they are, into the bargain, the fashionable and accredited company of the place; for people of the very best quality can be as silly, as ill-bred, and as worthless, as people of the meanest degree. On the other hand, a company consisting entirely of people of very low condition, whatever their merit or parts may be, can never be called good company, and consequently should not be much frequented, though by no means despised. . . .

But the company which of all others you should most carefully avoid, is that low company which, in every sense of the word, is low indeed, low in rank, low in parts, low in manners, and low in merit. . . .

There is good sense in the Spanish saying, "Tell me whom you live with and I will tell you who you are." Make it, therefore, your business, wherever you are, to get into that company which everybody of the place allows to be the best company, next to their own, which is the best definition that I can give you of good company. Adieu.

LETTER XXVIII.

CONDUCT IN SOCIETY.

BATH, October 19, O. S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

HAVING in my last pointed out what sort of company you should keep, I will now give you some rules for your conduct in it; rules which my own experience and observation enable me to lay down, and communicate to you with some degree of confidence. I have often given you hints of this kind before, but then it has been by snatches; I will now be more regular and methodical. I shall say nothing with regard to your bodily carriage and address, but leave them to the care of your dancing-master, and to your own attention to the best models: remember, however, that they are of consequence.

Talk often, but never long; in that case, if you do not please, at least you are sure not to tire, your hearers. Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, every one being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.

Tell stories very seldom, and absolutely never but where they are very apt and very short. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

Never hold anybody by the button, or the hand, in order to be heard out; for, if people are not willing to hear you, you had much better hold your tongue than them.

Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company (commonly him whom they observe to be the most silent, or their next neighbor) to whisper, or at least, in a half voice, to convey a continuity of words to. This is ex-

cessively ill-bred, and, in some degree, a fraud; conversation stock being a joint and common property. But, on the other hand, if one of these unmerciful talkers lays hold of you, hear him with patience (and at least seeming attention), if he is worth obliging; for nothing will oblige him more than a patient hearing, as nothing would hurt him more, than either to leave him in the midst of his discourse, or to discover your impatience under your affliction.

Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in. If you have parts, you will show them, more or less, upon every subject; and if you have not, you had better talk sillily upon a subject of other people's than of your own choosing.

Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies, argumentative, polemical conversations; which, though they should not, yet certainly do, indispose, for a time, the contending parties towards each other: and, if the controversy grows warm and noisy, endeavor to put an end to it by some genteel levity or joke. I quieted such a conversation hubbub once, by representing to them that though I was persuaded none there present would repeat, out of company, what passed in it, yet I could not answer for the discretion of the passengers in the street, who must necessarily hear all that was said.

Above all things, and upon all occasions, avoid speaking of yourself, if it be possible. Such is the natural pride and vanity of our hearts, that it perpetually breaks out, even in people of the best parts, in all the various modes and figures of the egotism.

Some abruptly speak advantageously of themselves, without either pretence or provocation. They are impudent. Others proceed more artfully, as they imagine; and forge accusations against themselves, complain of calumnies which they never heard, in order to justify themselves, by exhibiting a catalogue of their many virtues. *They acknowledge it*

may, indeed, seem odd, that they should talk in that manner of themselves ; it is what they do not like, and what they never would have done ; no, no tortures should ever have forced it from them, if they had not been thus unjustly and monstrously accused. But, in these cases, justice is surely due to one's self, as well as to others ; and, when our character is attacked, we may say, in our own justification, what otherwise we never would have said. This thin veil of modesty, drawn before vanity, is much too transparent to conceal it, even from very moderate discernment.

Others go more modestly and more slyly still (as they think) to work ; but, in my mind, still more ridiculously. They confess themselves (not without some degree of shame and confusion) into all the cardinal virtues ; by first degrading them into weaknesses, and then owning their misfortune, in being made up of those weaknesses. *They cannot see people suffer without sympathizing with, and endearing to help, them. They cannot see people want without relieving them : though truly their own circumstances cannot very well afford it. They cannot help speaking truth, though they know all the imprudence of it. In short, they know that, with all these weaknesses, they are not fit to live in the world, much less to thrive in it. But they are now too old to change, and must rub on as well as they can.* This sounds too ridiculous and *outré*, almost, for the stage ; and yet, take my word for it, you will frequently meet with it upon the common stage of the world. And here I will observe, by the by, that you will often meet with characters in nature so extravagant, that a discreet poet would not venture to set them upon the stage in their true and high coloring.

This principle of vanity and pride is so strong in human nature, that it descends even to the lowest objects ; and one often sees people angling for praise, where, admitting all they say to be true (which, by the way, it seldom is), no just praise is to be caught. One man affirms that he has

rode post a hundred miles in six hours: probably it is a lie; but supposing it to be true, what then? Why, he is a very good postboy, that is all. Another asserts, and probably not without oaths, that he has drunk six or eight bottles of wine at a sitting: out of charity I will believe him a liar; for if I do not I must think him a beast.

Such, and a thousand more, are the follies and extravagancies which vanity draws people into, and which always defeat their own purpose: and, as Waller¹ says, upon another subject,

“ Make the wretch the most despised,
Where most he wishes to be prized.”

The only sure way of avoiding these evils is, never to speak of yourself at all. But when historically you are obliged to mention yourself, take care not to drop one single word that can directly or indirectly be construed as fishing for applause. Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects, or add lustre to your perfections: but, on the contrary, it may, and nine times in ten will, make the former more glaring, and the latter obscure. If you are silent upon your own subject, neither envy, indignation, nor ridicule will obstruct or allay the applause which you may really deserve; but if you publish your own panegyric, upon any occasion or in any shape whatsoever, and however artfully dressed or disguised, they will all conspire against you, and you will be disappointed of the very end you aim at.

Take care never to seem dark and mysterious; which is not only a very unamiable character, but a very suspicious one, too: if you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing.

¹ Edmund Waller (1605-1687), English poet, friend and supporter of Cromwell.

The height of abilities is, to have *volto sciolto* and *pensieri stretti* ;¹ that is, a frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent and reserved interior; to be upon your own guard, and yet, by a seeming natural openness, to put people off of theirs. Depend upon it, nine in ten of every company you are in, will avail themselves of every indiscreet and unguarded expression of yours, if they can turn it to their own advantage. A prudent reserve is therefore as necessary as a seeming openness is prudent. Always look people in the face when you speak to them; the not doing it is thought to imply conscious guilt; besides that, you lose the advantage of observing by their countenances what impression your discourse makes upon them. In order to know people's real sentiments, I trust much more to my eyes than to my ears; for they can say whatever they have a mind I should hear, but they can seldom help looking what they have no intention that I should know.

Neither retail nor receive scandal, willingly; for though the defamation of others may, for the present, gratify the malignity or the pride of our hearts, cool reflection will draw very disadvantageous conclusions from such a disposition; and in the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

Mimicry, which is the common and favorite amusement of little, low minds, is in the utmost contempt with great ones. It is the lowest and most illiberal of all buffoonery. Pray neither practice it yourself, nor applaud it in others. Besides that, the person mimicked is insulted; and, as I have often observed to you before, an insult is never forgiven.

I need not (I believe) advise you to adapt your conversation to the people you are conversing with; for I suppose you would not, without this caution, have talked upon the same subject, and in the same manner, to a minister of state, a bishop, a philosopher, a captain, and

¹ A mobile face and thoughts close-guarded.

a woman. A man of the world must, like the chameleon, be able to take every different hue; which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary, complaisance, for it relates only to manners, and not to morals.

One word only as to swearing; and that I hope and believe is more than is necessary. You may sometimes hear some people in good company interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think; but you must observe, too, that those who do so are never those who contribute, in any degree, to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns, or people of low education; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly and as illiberal as it is wicked.

Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob, who are only pleased with silly things; for true wit or good sense never excited a laugh since the creation of the world. A man of parts and fashion is therefore only seen to smile, but never heard to laugh.

But, to conclude this long letter; all the above mentioned rules, however carefully you may observe them, will lose half their effect if unaccompanied by the Graces. Whatever you say, if you say it with a supercilious, cynical face, or an embarrassed countenance, or a silly disconcerted grin, will be ill received. If, into the bargain, *you mutter it, or utter it indistinctly and ungracefully*, it will be still worse received. If your air and address are vulgar, awkward, and *gauche*,¹ you may be esteemed indeed, if you have great intrinsic merit, but you will never please; and without pleasing, you will rise but heavily. Venus, among the Ancients, was synonymous with the Graces, who were always supposed to accompany her; and Horace tells us that even Youth, and Mercury, the god of arts and eloquence, would not do without her. . . . Adieu.

¹ Uncouth.

LETTER XXIX.

SCHOLARSHIP. DESIRE OF PRAISE.

LONDON, December 20, 1748.

DEAR BOY,

MR. HARTE'S last letter, of the 14th N. S. particularly, makes me extremely happy, by assuring me, that in every respect you do exceedingly well. I am not afraid by what I now say of making you too vain; because I do not think that a just consciousness, and an honest pride of doing well, can be called vanity; for vanity is either the silly affectation of good qualities which one has not, or the sillier pride of what does not deserve commendation in itself. . . . Consider what lustre and *éclat* it will give you when you return here, to be allowed to be the best scholar of a gentleman in England, not to mention the real pleasure and solid comfort which such knowledge will give you throughout your whole life. . . .

But here let me, as an old stager upon the theatre of the world, suggest one consideration to you; which is, to extend your desire of praise a little beyond the strictly praiseworthy; or else you may be apt to discover too much contempt for at least three parts in five of the world; who will never forgive it you. In the mass of mankind, I fear there is too great a majority of fools and knaves, who, simply for their number, must to a certain degree be respected, though they are by no means respectable. And a man who will show every knave or fool that he thinks him such, will engage in a most ruinous war against numbers much superior to those that he and his allies can bring into the field. Abhor a knave, and pity a fool, in your heart; but let neither of them unnecessarily see that you do so. Some complaisance and attention to fools is pru-

dent, and not mean: as a silent abhorrence of individual knaves is often necessary, and not criminal. . . .

Adieu! God bless you! and may you continue to deserve my love as much as you now enjoy it.

LETTER XXX.

FLATTERY. TEMPER.

LONDON, May 22, 1749.

DEAR BOY,

I RECOMMENDED to you in my last an innocent piece of art—that of flattering people behind their backs, in presence of those who, to make their own court, much more than for your sake, will not fail to repeat, and even amplify, the praise to the party concerned. This is of all flattery the most pleasing, and consequently the most effectual. There are other, and many other, inoffensive arts of this kind, which are necessary in the course of the world, and which he who practises the earliest will please the most, and rise the soonest. The spirits and vivacity of youth are apt to neglect them as useless, or reject them as troublesome; but subsequent knowledge and experience of the world remind us of their importance, commonly when it is too late. One principal of these things is the mastery of one's temper, and that coolness of mind and serenity of countenance, which hinder us from discovering, by words, actions, or even looks, those passions or sentiments by which we are inwardly moved or agitated, and the discovery of which gives cooler and abler people such infinite advantages over us, not only in great business, but in the most common occurrences of life. A man who does not possess himself enough to hear disagreeable things without visible marks of anger and change of countenance, or agreeable ones without sudden bursts of joy and expansion of

countenance, is at the mercy of every artful knave or pert coxcomb. The former will provoke or please you by design, to catch unguarded words or looks by which he will easily decipher the secrets of your heart, of which you should keep the key yourself and trust it with no man living. . . . Determine, too, to keep your countenance as unmoved and unembarrassed as possible, which steadiness you may get a habit of by constant attention. . . . I even repeat frequently the same things the better to imprint them on your young, and, I suppose, yet giddy mind, and I shall think that part of my time the best employed that contributes to make you employ yours well. God bless you, child.

LETTER XXXI.

SYSTEMATIC STUDY.

LONDON, September 12, O. S. 1749.

DEAR BOY,

IT seems extraordinary, but it is very true, that my anxiety for you increases in proportion to the good accounts which I receive of you from all hands. I promise myself so much from you, that I dread the least disappointment. You are now so near the port, which I have so long wished and labored to bring you into, that my concern would be doubled should you be shipwrecked within sight of it. The object, therefore, of this letter is (laying aside all the authority of a parent), to conjure you as a friend, by the affection you have for me (and surely you have reason to have some), and by the regard you have for yourself, to go on, with assiduity and attention, to complete that work, which, of late, you have carried on so well, and which is now so near being finished. My wishes, and my plan, were to make you shine, and distinguish yourself equally in the learned and the polite world. Few have

been able to do it. Deep learning is generally tainted with pedantry, or at least unadorned by manners; as, on the other hand, polite manners, and the turn of the world, are too often unsupported by knowledge, and consequently end contemptibly in the frivolous dissipation of drawing-rooms and *ruelles*.¹ You are now got over the dry and difficult parts of learning; what remains requires much more time than trouble. You have lost time by your illness; you must regain it now or never. I therefore most earnestly desire, for your own sake, that for these next six months, at least six hours every morning, uninterruptedly, may be inviolably sacred to your studies with Mr. Harte. I do not know whether he will require so much, but I know that I do, and hope you will, and consequently prevail with him to give you that time: I own it is a good deal; but when both you and he consider, that the work will be so much better and so much sooner done, by such an assiduous and continued application, you will neither of you think it too much, and each will find his account in it. So much for the mornings which, from your own good sense, and Mr. Harte's tenderness and care of you, will, I am sure, be thus well employed. It is not only reasonable, but useful, too, that your evenings should be devoted to amusements and pleasures; and therefore I not only allow, but recommend, that they should be employed at assemblies, balls, *spectacles*, and in the best companies; with this restriction only, that the consequences of the evening's diversions may not break in upon the morning's studies, by breakfastings, visits, and idle parties into the country. At your age, you need not be ashamed, when any of these morning parties are proposed, to say you must beg to be excused, for you are obliged to devote your mornings to Mr. Harte; that I will have it so; and that you dare not do otherwise. Lay it all upon me, though I am persuaded it will be as much your

¹ Alleys.

own inclination as it is mine. But those frivolous, idle people, whose time hangs upon their own hands, and who desire to make others lose theirs too, are not to be reasoned with; and indeed it would be doing them too much honor. The shortest civil answers are the best; *I cannot, I dare not*, instead of *I will not*; for, if you were to enter with them into the necessity of study, and the usefulness of knowledge, it would only furnish them with matter for their silly jests; which, though I would not have you mind, I would not have you invite. I will suppose you at Rome, studying six hours uninterruptedly with Mr. Harte, every morning, and passing your evenings with the best company of Rome, observing their manners and forming your own; and I will suppose a number of idle, sauntering, illiterate English, as there commonly is there, living entirely with one another, supping, drinking, and sitting up late at each other's lodgings; commonly in riots and scrapes when drunk; and never in good company when sober. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXXII.

ABSENT-MINDEDNESS.

LONDON, September 22, O. S. 1749.

DEAR BOY,

IF I had faith in philters and love potions, I should suspect that you had given Sir Charles Williams some, by the manner in which he speaks of you, not only to me, but to everybody else. I will not repeat to you what he says of the extent and correctness of your knowledge, as it might either make you vain, or persuade you that you had already enough of what nobody can have too much. You will easily imagine how many questions I asked, and how narrowly I sifted him upon your subject; he answered me, and I dare say with truth, just as I could have wished; till, satisfied

entirely with his accounts of your character and learning, I inquired into other matters, intrinsically indeed of less consequence, but still of great consequence, to every man, and of more to you than to almost any man; I mean your address, manners, and air. To these questions, the same truth which he had observed before, obliged him to give me much less satisfactory answers. And, as he thought himself, in friendship both to you and me, obliged to tell me the disagreeable, as well as the agreeable, truths, upon the same principle I think myself obliged to repeat them to you.

He told me, then, that in company you were frequently most *provokingly* inattentive, absent, and *distract*;¹ that you came into a room and presented yourself very awkwardly; that at table you constantly threw down knives, forks, napkins, bread, etc., and that you neglected your person and dress, to a degree unpardonable at any age, and much more so at yours.

These things, how immaterial soever they may seem to people who do not know the world and the nature of mankind, give me, who know them to be exceedingly material, very great concern. I have long distrusted you, and therefore frequently admonished you, upon these articles; and I tell you plainly that I shall not be easy till I hear a very different account of them. I know no one thing more offensive to a company than that inattention and *distraction*. It is showing them the utmost contempt, and people never forget contempt. No man is *distract* with the man he fears, or the woman he loves; which is a proof that every man can get the better of that *distraction* when he thinks it worth his while to do so; and, take my word for it, it is always worth his while. For my own part, I would rather be in company with a dead man than with an absent one; for if the dead man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt; whereas the absent man, silently indeed, but

¹ Lost in thought.

very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention. Besides, can an absent man make any observations upon the characters, customs, and manners of the company? No. He may be in the best companies all his lifetime (if they will admit him, which, if I were they, I would not) and never be one jot the wiser. I never will converse with an absent man; one may as well talk to a deaf one. It is in truth a practical blunder to address ourselves to a man, who, we see plainly, neither hears, minds, nor understands us. Moreover, I aver that no man is, in any degree, fit for either business or conversation, who cannot, and does not, direct and command his attention to the present object, be that what it will. . . . I give you fair warning that when we meet, if you are absent in mind, I will soon be absent in body, for it will be impossible for me to stay in the room. I expect you not only well dressed, but very well dressed: I expect a gracefulness in all your motions, and something particularly engaging in your address. All this I expect, and all this is in your power, by care and attention, to make me find; but to tell you the plain truth, if I do not find it, we shall not converse very much together, for I cannot stand inattention and awkwardness; it would endanger my health. You have often seen, and I have as often made you observe, L——'s distinguished inattention and awkwardness. Wrapped up, like a Laputan, in intense thought, and possibly sometimes in no thought at all; which I believe is very often the case of absent people; he does not know his most intimate acquaintance by sight, or answers them as if he were at cross-purposes. He leaves his hat in one room, his sword in another, and would leave his shoes in a third, if his buckles, though awry, did not save them: his legs and arms, by his awkward management of them, seemed to have undergone the *Question extraordinaire*; ¹ and his head, always hanging upon

¹ Torture.

one or other of his shoulders, seems to have received the first stroke upon a block. I sincerely value and esteem him for his parts, learning, and virtue; but for the soul of me I cannot love him in company. This will be universally the case in common life, of every inattentive, awkward man, let his real merit and knowledge be ever so great. When I was of your age I desired to shine, as far as I was able, in every part of life; and was as attentive to my manners, my dress, and my air, in company on evenings, as to my books and my tutor in the mornings. A young fellow should be ambitious to shine in everything; and, of the two, always rather overdo than underdo. These things are by no means trifles; they are of infinite consequence to those who are to be thrown into the great world, and who would make a figure or a fortune in it. It is not sufficient to deserve well; one must please well too. Awkward, disagreeable merit will never carry anybody far. Wherever you find a good dancing-master pray let him put you upon your haunches: not so much for the sake of dancing, as for coming into a room, and presenting yourself genteelly and gracefully. Women, whom you ought to endeavor to please, cannot forgive a vulgar and awkward air and gestures; *il leur faut du brillant*.¹ The generality of men are pretty like them, and are equally taken by the same exterior graces.

I am very glad that you have received the diamond buckles safe: all I desire, in return for them, is, that they may be buckled even upon your feet, and that your stockings may not hide them. I should be sorry you were an egregious fop; but I protest that, of the two, I would rather have you a fop than a sloven. I think negligence in my own dress, even at my age, when certainly I expect no advantages from my dress, would be indecent with regard to others. I have done with fine clothes; but I will have my plain clothes fit me, and made like other people's. In

¹ They must have polish.

the evenings, I recommend to you the company of women of fashion, who have a right to attention, and will be paid it. Their company will smooth your manners, and give you a habit of attention and respect; of which you will find the advantage among men.

My plan for you, from the beginning, has been to make you shine, equally in the learned and in the polite world; the former part is almost completed to my wishes, and will, I am persuaded, in a little time more, be quite so. The latter part is still in your power to complete; and I flatter myself that you will do it, or else the former part will avail you very little, especially in your department, where the exterior address and graces do half the business; they must be the harbingers of your merit, or your merit will be very coldly received: all can and do judge of the former, few of the latter.

Mr. Harte tells me that you have grown very much since your illness: if you get up to five feet ten, or even nine, inches, your figure will, probably, be a good one; and, if well dressed and genteel, will probably please, which is a much greater advantage to a man than people commonly think. Lord Bacon calls it a letter of recommendation.

I would wish you to be the *omnis homo, l'homme universel*.¹ You are nearer to it, if you please, than ever anybody was at your age; and if you will but, for the course of this next year only, exert your whole attention to your studies in the mornings, and to your address, manners, air, and *tournure*,² in the evenings, you will be the man I wish you, and the man that is rarely seen.

Our letters go, at best, so irregularly, and so often miscarry totally, that, for greater security, I repeat the same things. So, though I acknowledged by last post Mr. Harte's letter of the 8th September, N. S., I acknowledge it again by this to you. If this should find you still at Verona, let it

¹ The universal man.

² Appearance.

inform you that I wish you would set out soon for Naples, unless Mr. Harte should think it better for you to stay at Verona, or any other place on this side Rome, till you go there for the Jubilee. Nay, if he likes it better, I am very willing that you should go directly from Verona to Rome; for you cannot have too much of Rome, whether upon account of the language, the curiosities, or the company. My only reason for mentioning Naples is for the sake of the climate, upon account of your health; but if Mr. Harte thinks your health is now so well restored as to be above climate, he may steer your course wherever he thinks proper; and, for aught I know, your going directly to Rome, and consequently staying there so much the longer, may be as well as anything else. . . . Adieu, my dear child.

XXXIII.

VULGARITY IN SPEECH AND MANNERS.

LONDON, September 27, O. S. 1749.

DEAR BOY,

A VULGAR ordinary way of thinking, acting, or speaking, implies a low education, and a habit of low company. Young people contract it at school, or among servants, with whom they are too often used to converse; but, after they frequent good company, they must want attention and observation very much, if they do not lay it quite aside. And indeed if they do not, good company will be very apt to lay them aside. The various kinds of vulgarisms are infinite; I cannot pretend to point them out to you; but I will give you some samples, by which you may guess at the rest.

A vulgar man is captious and jealous; eager and impetuous about trifles. He suspects himself to be slighted, thinks everything that is said meant at him; if the company hap-

pens to laugh, he is persuaded they laugh at him; he grows angry and testy, says something very impertinent, and draws himself into a scrape, by showing what he calls a proper spirit, and asserting himself. A man of fashion does not suppose himself to be either the sole or principal object of the thoughts, looks, or words of the company; and never suspects that he is either slighted or laughed at, unless he is conscious that he deserves it. And if (which very seldom happens) the company is absurd or ill-bred enough to do either, he does not care twopence, unless the insult be so gross and plain as to require satisfaction of another kind. As he is above trifles, he is never vehement and eager about them; and, wherever they are concerned, rather acquiesces than wrangles. A vulgar man's conversation always savors strongly of the lowness of his education and company. It turns chiefly upon his domestic affairs, his servants, the excellent order he keeps in his own family, and the little anecdotes of the neighborhood; all which he relates with emphasis, as interesting matters. He is a man gossip.

Vulgarism in language is the next and distinguishing characteristic of bad company and a bad education. A man of fashion avoids nothing with more care than that. Proverbial expressions and trite sayings are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man. Would he say that men differ in their tastes, he both supports and adorns that opinion by the good old saying, as he respectfully calls it, that *what is one man's Meat is another man's Poison*. If anybody attempts being *smart*, as he calls it, upon him, he gives them *Tit for Tat*, ay, that he does. He has always some favorite word for the time being, which, for the sake of using often, he commonly abuses. Such as *vastly* angry, *vastly* kind, *vastly* handsome, and *vastly* ugly. Even his pronunciation of proper words carries the mark of the beast along with it. He calls the earth *yearth*; he is *obleiged* not *obliged* to you.

He goes *to wards* and not *towards* such a place. He sometimes affects hard words, by way of ornament, which he always mangles like a learned woman. A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms, uses neither favorite words nor hard words; but takes great care to speak very correctly and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies.

An awkward address, ungraceful attitudes and actions, and a certain left-handiness (if I may use that word), loudly proclaim low education and low company; for it is impossible to suppose that a man can have frequented good company, without having caught something, at least, of their air and motions. A new-raised man is distinguished in a regiment by his awkwardness; but he must be impenetrably dull if, in a month or two's time, he cannot perform at least the common manual exercise, and look like a soldier. The very accoutrements of a man of fashion are grievous encumbrances to a vulgar man. He is at a loss what to do with his hat, when it is not upon his head; his cane (if unfortunately he wears one) is at perpetual war with every cup of tea or coffee he drinks; destroys them first, and then accompanies them in their fall. His sword is formidable only to his own legs, which would possibly carry him fast enough out of the way of any sword but his own. His clothes fit him so ill, and constrain him so much, that he seems rather their prisoner than their proprietor. He presents himself in company like a criminal in a court of justice; his very air condemns him; and people of fashion will no more connect themselves with the one, than people of character will with the other. This repulse drives and sinks him into low company; a gulf from whence no man, after a certain age, ever emerged.

Les manières nobles et aisées, la tournure d'un homme de condition, le ton de la bonne compagnie, les Grâces, le je ne

sais quoi, qui plaît,¹ are as necessary to adorn and introduce your intrinsic merit and knowledge, as the polish is to the diamond, which, without that polish, would never be worn, whatever it might weigh. Do not imagine that these accomplishments are only useful with women; they are much more so with men. In a public assembly, what an advantage has a graceful speaker, with genteel motions, a handsome figure, and a liberal air, over one who shall speak full as much good sense, but destitute of these ornaments! In business, how prevalent are the Graces, how detrimental is the want of them! By the help of these I have known some men refuse favors less offensively than others granted them. The utility of them in courts, and negotiations, is inconceivable. You gain the hearts and consequently the secrets, of nine in ten that you have to do with, in spite even of their prudence, which will, nine times in ten, be the dupe of their hearts, and of their senses. Consider the importance of these things as they deserve, and you will not lose one moment in the pursuit of them.

You are travelling now in a country once so famous both for arts and arms, that (however degenerated at present) it still deserves your attention and reflection. View it, therefore, with care, compare its former with its present state, and examine into the causes of its rise, and its decay. Consider it classically and politically, and do not run through it, as too many of your young countrymen do, musically, and (to use a ridiculous word) *knick-knackically*. No piping nor fiddling, I beseech you; no days lost in poring upon almost imperceptible *Intaglios*² and *Cameos*³: and do not become a *Virtuoso*⁴ of small wares. Form a taste of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, if you please, by a careful examina-

¹ Noble and graceful manners, the elegance of a man of position, the taste of good company, the Graces, and I know not what, if it pleases.

² A figure cut in a stone, causing a depression.

³ A carving in relief.

⁴ One devoted to the fine arts: a collector of curiosities.

tion of the works of the best ancient and modern artists; those are liberal arts, and a real taste and knowledge of them become a man of fashion very well. But, beyond certain bounds, the Man of Taste ends, and the frivolous Virtuoso begins.

Your friend Mendes, the good Samaritan, dined with me yesterday. He has more good nature and generosity than parts. However, I will show him all the civilities that his kindness to you so justly deserves; he tells me that you are taller than I am, which I am very glad of. I desire you may excel me in everything else too; and, far from repining, I shall rejoice at your superiority. He commends your friend Mr. Stevens extremely; of whom, too, I have heard so good a character from other people, that I am very glad of your connection with him. It may prove of use to you hereafter. When you meet with such sort of Englishmen abroad, who, either from their parts or their rank, are likely to make a figure at home, I would advise you to cultivate them, and get their favorable testimony of you here, especially those who are to return to England before you. Sir Charles Williams has puffed you (as the mob call it) here extremely. If three or four more people of parts do the same, before you come back, your first appearance in London will be to great advantage. Many people do, and indeed ought, to take things upon trust; many more do who need not; and few dare dissent from an established opinion. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIV.

THE ADORNING OF KNOWLEDGE.

LONDON, November 24, O. S. 1749.

DEAR BOY,

I HAVE written to you so often of late upon Good Breeding, Address, *les Manières liantis*,¹ the Graces, etc., that I

¹ The affable manners.

shall confine this letter to another subject, pretty near akin to them, and which, I am sure, you are full as deficient in; I mean, Style.

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill received, as your person, though ever so well-proportioned, would if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters. It is not every understanding that can judge of matter; but every ear can and does judge, more or less, of style: and were I either to speak or write to the public, I should prefer moderate matter, adorned with all the beauties and elegancies of style, to the strongest matter in the world, ill worded and ill delivered. Your business is negotiation abroad and oratory in the House of Commons at home. What figure can you make in either case, if your style be inelegant, I do not say bad? Imagine yourself writing an office-letter to a Secretary of State, which letter is to be read by the whole Cabinet Council, and very possibly afterwards laid before Parliament; any one barbarism, solecism, or vulgarism in it would, in a very few days, circulate through the whole kingdom, to your disgrace and ridicule. For instance; I will suppose you had written the following letter from the Hague, to the Secretary of State at London; and leave you to suppose the consequences of it.

MY LORD,

I *had*, last night, the honor of your Lordship's letter of the 24th, and will *set about doing* the orders contained therein; and *if so be* that I can get that affair done by the next post, I will not fail *for to* give your Lordship an account of it by *next post*. I have told the French Minister, *as how*, that *if* that affair be not soon concluded, your Lordship would think it *all long of him*; and that he must have neglected *for to* have wrote to his Court about it. I must

beg leave to put your Lordship in mind, *as how* that I am now full three quarters in arrear; and if *so be* that I do not very soon receive at least one half year, I shall *cut a very bad figure*, for *this here* place is very dear. I shall be *vastly beholden* to your Lordship for *that there* mark of your favor; and so I *rest*, or *remain*, Your, etc.

You will tell me, possibly, that this is a *caricatura* of an illiberal and inelegant style; I will admit it: but assure you, at the same time, that a dispatch with less than half these faults would blow you up for ever. It is by no means sufficient to be free from faults in speaking and writing; you must do both correctly and elegantly. In faults of this kind it is not *ille optimus qui minimis urgetur*¹; but he is unpardonable who has any at all, because it is his own fault: he need only attend to, observe, and imitate the best authors.

It is a very true saying, that a man must be born a poet, but that he may make himself an orator; and the very first principle of an orator is, to speak his own language particularly, with the utmost purity and elegancy. A man will be forgiven even great errors in a foreign language, but in his own even the least slips are justly laid hold of and ridiculed.

A person of the House of Commons, speaking two years ago upon naval affairs, asserted that we had then the finest navy *upon the face of the yearth*. This happy mixture of blunder and vulgarism, you may easily imagine, was matter of immediate ridicule; but I can assure you that it continues so still, and will be remembered as long as he lives and speaks. Another, speaking in defence of a gentleman upon whom a censure was moved, happily said, that he thought that gentleman was more *liable* to be thanked and rewarded, than censured. You know, I presume, that *liable* can never be used in a good sense.

¹ He is greatest who is moved by the smallest things.

You have with you three or four of the best English Authors, Dryden,¹ Atterbury,¹ and Swift¹; read them with the utmost care, and with a particular view to their language; and they may possibly correct that *curious infelicity of diction*, which you acquired at Westminster. Mr. Harte excepted, I will admit that you have met with very few English abroad, who could improve your style; and with many, I dare say, who speak as ill as yourself, and it may be worse; you must, therefore, take the more pains, and consult your authors, and Mr. Harte, the more. I need not tell you how attentive the Romans and Greeks, particularly the Athenians, were to this object. It is also a study among the Italians and the French, witness their respective Academies and Dictionaries, for improving and fixing their languages. To our shame be it spoken, it is less attended to here than in any polite country; but that is no reason why you should not attend to it; on the contrary, it will distinguish you the more. Cicero says, very truly, that it is glorious to excel other men in that very article, in which men excel brutes; *speech*.

Constant experience has shown me, that great purity and elegance of style, with a graceful elocution, cover a multitude of faults, in either a speaker or a writer. For my own part, I confess (and I believe most people are of my mind) that if a speaker should ungracefully mutter or stammer out to me the sense of an angel, deformed by barbarisms and solecisms, or larded with vulgarisms, he should never speak to me a second time, if I could help it. Gain the heart, or you gain nothing; the eyes and the ears are the only roads to the heart. Merit and knowledge will not gain hearts, though they will secure them when gained. Pray have that truth ever in your mind. Engage the eyes, by your address, air, and motions; soothe the ears, by the elegance and harmony

¹ Contemporary English writers. D., 1631-1700. A., 1662-1732. S., 1667-1745.

of your diction: the heart will certainly follow; and the whole man, or woman, will as certainly follow the heart. I must repeat it to you, over and over again, that, with all the knowledge which you may have at present, or hereafter acquire, and with all the merit that ever man had, if you have not a graceful address, liberal and engaging manners, a prepossessing air, and a good degree of eloquence in speaking and writing, you will be nobody: but will have the daily mortification of seeing people, with not one tenth part of your merit or knowledge, get the start of you, and disgrace you, both in company and in business. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXXV.

TRUE ELOCUTION.

LONDON, December 9, 1749.

DEAR BOY,

It is now above forty years since I have never spoken nor written one single word without giving myself at least one moment's time to consider whether it was a good one or a bad one, and whether I could not find out a better in its place. An unharmonious and rugged period, at this time, shocks my ears; and I, like all the rest of the world, will willingly exchange and give up some degree of rough sense, for a good degree of pleasing sound. I will freely and truly own to you, without either vanity or false modesty, that whatever reputation I have acquired as a speaker is more owing to my constant attention to my diction, than to my matter, which was necessarily just the same as other people's. When you come into Parliament, your reputation as a speaker will depend much more upon your words, and your periods, than upon the subject. The same matter occurs equally to everybody of common sense, upon the same question; the dressing it well is what excites the attention and admiration of the audience.

It is in Parliament that I have set my heart upon your making a figure; it is there that I want to have you justly proud of yourself, and to make me justly proud of you. This means that you must be a good speaker there; I use the word *must*, because I know you may if you will. The vulgar, who are always mistaken, look upon a speaker and a comet with the same astonishment and admiration, taking them both for preternatural phenomena. This error discourages many young men from attempting that character; and good speakers are willing to have their talent considered as something very extraordinary, if not a peculiar gift of God to His elect. But let you and me analyze and simplify this good speaker; let us strip him of those adventitious plumes, with which his own pride, and the ignorance of others have decked him, and we shall find the true definition of him to be no more than this: — A man of good common sense, who reasons justly, and expresses himself elegantly on that subject upon which he speaks. There is surely no witchcraft in this. A man of sense, without a superior and astonishing degree of parts, will not talk nonsense upon any subject; nor will he, if he has the least taste or application, talk inelegantly. What, then, does all this mighty art and mystery of speaking in Parliament amount to? Why, no more than this, That the man who speaks in the House of Commons, speaks in that House, and to four hundred people, that opinion, upon a given subject, which he would make no difficulty of speaking in any house in England, round the fire, or at table, to any fourteen people whatsoever; better judges, perhaps, and severer critics of what he says, than any fourteen gentlemen of the House of Commons.

I have spoken frequently in Parliament, and not always without some applause; and therefore I can assure you, from my experience, that there is very little in it. The elegance of the style, and the turn of the periods, make the

chief impression upon the hearers. Give them but one or two round and harmonious periods in a speech, which they will retain and repeat; and they will go home as well satisfied as people do from an opera, humming all the way one or two favorite tunes that have struck their ears and were easily caught. Most people have ears, but few have judgment; tickle those ears, and depend upon it you will catch their judgments, such as they are.

Cicero, conscious that he was at the top of his profession (for in his time eloquence was a profession), in order to set himself off, defines, in his Treatise *de Oratore*, an orator to be such a man as never was, or never will be; and, by this fallacious argument, says, that he must know every art and science whatsoever, or how shall he speak upon them? But with submission to so great an authority, my definition of an orator is extremely different from, and I believe much truer than, his. I call that man an orator who reasons justly, and expresses himself elegantly upon whatever subject he treats. Problems in Geometry, Equations in Algebra, Processes in Chemistry, and Experiments in Anatomy, are never, that I have heard of, the objects of eloquence; and therefore I humbly conceive that a man may be a very fine speaker, and yet know nothing of Geometry, Algebra, Chemistry, or Anatomy. The subjects of all Parliamentary debates are subjects of common sense singly.

Thus I write whatever occurs to me, that I think may contribute either to form or inform you. May my labor not be in vain! and it will not, if you will but have half the concern for yourself that I have for you. Adieu.

LETTER XXXVI

RELIGION. MORALITY. CHARACTER.

LONDON, January 8, O. S. 1750.

DEAR BOY,

I HAVE seldom or never written to you upon the subject of Religion and Morality: your own reason, I am persuaded, has given you true notions of both; they speak best for themselves; but, if they wanted assistance, you have Mr. Harte at hand, both for precept and example: to your own reason, therefore, and to Mr. Harte, shall I refer you, for the reality of both; and confine myself, in this letter, to the decency, the utility, and the necessity of scrupulously preserving the appearances of both. When I say the appearances of religion, I do not mean that you should talk or act like a missionary, or an enthusiast, nor that you should take up a controversial cudgel against whoever attacks the sect you are of; this would be both useless, and unbecoming your age: but I mean that you should by no means seem to approve, encourage, or applaud, those libertine notions, which strike at religions equally, and which are the poor threadbare topics of half wits, and minute philosophers. Even those who are silly enough to laugh at their jokes are still wise enough to distrust and detest their characters: for, putting moral virtues at the highest, and religion at the lowest, religion must still be allowed to be a collateral security, at least, to virtue; and every prudent man will sooner trust to two securities than to one. Whenever, therefore, you happen to be in company with those pretended *Esprits forts*, or with thoughtless libertines, who laugh at all religion to show their wit, or disclaim it to complete their riot, let no word or look of yours intimate the least approbation; on the contrary, let a silent gravity express your dislike: but enter not into the subject, and

decline such unprofitable and indecent controversies. Depend upon this truth, That every man is the worse looked upon, and the less trusted, for being thought to have no religion; in spite of all the pompous and specious epithets he may assume, of *Esprit fort*, free-thinker, or moral philosopher; and a wise atheist (if such a thing there is) would, for his own interest, and character in this world, pretend to some religion.

Your moral character must be not only pure, but, like Cæsar's wife, unsuspected. The least speck or blemish upon it is fatal. Nothing degrades and vilifies more, for it excites and unites detestation and contempt. There are, however, wretches in the world profligate enough to explode all notions of moral good and evil; to maintain that they are merely local, and depend entirely upon the customs and fashions of different countries: nay, there are still, if possible, more unaccountable wretches; I mean those who affect to preach and propagate such absurd and infamous notions, without believing them themselves. These are the devil's hypocrites. Avoid, as much as possible, the company of such people; who reflect a degree of discredit and infamy upon all who converse with them. But as you may sometimes, by accident, fall into such company, take great care that no complaisance, no good-humor, no warmth of festal mirth, ever make you seem even to acquiesce, much less to approve or applaud, such infamous doctrines. On the other hand, do not debate, nor enter into serious argument, upon a subject so much below it: but content yourself with telling these *Apostles*, that you know they are not serious; that you have a much better opinion of them than they would have you have; and that you are very sure they would not practise the doctrine they preach. But put your private mark upon them, and shun them for ever afterwards.

There is nothing so delicate as your moral character, and

nothing which it is your interest so much to preserve pure. Should you be suspected of injustice, malignity, perfidy, lying, etc., all the parts and knowledge in the world will never procure you esteem, friendship, or respect. A strange concurrence of circumstances has sometimes raised very bad men to high stations; but they have been raised like criminals to a pillory, where their persons and their crimes, by being more conspicuous, are only the more known, the more detested, and the more pelted and insulted. If, in any case whatsoever, affectation and ostentation are pardonable, it is in the case of morality; though, even there, I would not advise you to a pharisaical pomp of virtue. But I will recommend to you a most scrupulous tenderness for your moral character, and the utmost care not to say or do the least thing that may, ever so slightly, taint it. Show yourself, upon all occasions, the advocate, the friend, but not the bully, of virtue. Colonel Chartres, whom you have certainly heard of (who was, I believe, the most notorious blasted rascal in the world, and who had, by all sorts of crimes, amassed immense wealth), was so sensible of the disadvantage of a bad character, that I heard him once say, in his impudent, profligate manner, that though he would not give one farthing for virtue, he would give ten thousand pounds for a character; because he should get a hundred thousand pounds by it: whereas he was so blasted that he had no longer an opportunity of cheating people. Is it possible, then, that an honest man can neglect what a wise rogue would purchase so dear?

There is one of the vices above-mentioned, into which people of good education, and, in the main, of good principles, sometimes fall, from mistaken notions of skill, dexterity, and self-defence; I mean lying: though it is inseparably attended with more infamy and loss than any other. The prudence and necessity of often concealing the truth insensibly seduces people to violate it. It is

the only art of mean capacities, and the only refuge of mean spirits. Whereas concealing the truth, upon proper occasions, is as prudent and as innocent, as telling a lie, upon any occasion, is infamous and foolish. I will state you a case in your own department. Suppose you are employed at a foreign court, and that the minister of that court is absurd or impertinent enough to ask you what your instructions are, will you tell him a lie, which, as soon as found out, and found out it certainly will be, must destroy your credit, blast your character, and render you useless there? No. Will you tell him the truth, then, and betray your trust? As certainly, no. But you will answer, with firmness, that you are surprised at such a question; that you are persuaded he does not expect an answer to it; but that, at all events, he certainly will not have one. Such an answer will give him confidence in you; he will conceive an opinion of your veracity, of which opinion you may afterwards make very honest and fair advantages. But if, in negotiations, you are looked upon as a liar, and a trickster, no confidence will be placed in you, nothing will be communicated to you, and you will be in the situation of a man who has been burnt in the cheek; and who, from that mark, cannot afterwards get an honest livelihood, if he would, but must continue a thief.

Lord Bacon very justly makes a distinction between Simulation and Dissimulation; and allows the latter rather than the former: but still observes, that they are the weaker sort of Politicians who have recourse to either. A man who has strength of mind, and strength of parts, wants neither of them. *Certainly (says he) the ablest men that ever were have all had an openness and frankness of dealing, and a name of certainty and veracity; but then they were like horses well managed; for they could tell, passing well, when to stop, or turn: and at such times, when they thought the case*

indeed required some dissimulation, if then they used it, it came to pass that the former opinion spread abroad, of their good faith and clearness of dealing, made them almost invisible. There are people who indulge themselves in a sort of lying, which they reckon innocent, and which in one sense is so; for it hurts nobody but themselves. This sort of lying is the spurious offspring of vanity, begotten upon folly: these people deal in the marvellous; they have seen some things that never existed; they have seen other things which they never really saw, though they did exist, only because they were thought worth seeing. Has anything remarkable been said or done in any place, or in any company? they immediately present and declare themselves eye or ear witnesses of it. They have done feats themselves, unattempted, or at least unperformed, by others. They are always the heroes of their own fables; and think that they gain consideration, or at least present attention, by it. Whereas, in truth, all they get is ridicule and contempt, not without a good degree of distrust: for one must naturally conclude, that he who will tell any lie from idle vanity, will not scruple telling a greater for interest. Had I really seen anything so very extraordinary as to be almost incredible, I would keep it to myself, rather than, by telling it, give any one body room to doubt for one minute my veracity. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXXVII.

ECONOMY OF TIME.

LONDON, February 5, O. S. 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

VERY few people are good economists of their fortune, and still fewer of their time; and yet, of the two, the latter is the most precious. I heartily wish you to be a good economist of both; and you are now of an age to begin

to think seriously of these two important articles. Young people are apt to think they have so much time before them, that they may squander what they please of it, and yet have enough left; as very great fortunes have frequently seduced people to a ruinous profusion. Fatal mistakes, always repented of, but always too late! Old Mr. Lowndes, the famous Secretary of the Treasury, in the reigns of King William, Queen Anne, and King George the First, used to say, *Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.* To this maxim, which he not only preached, but practised, his two grandsons, at this time, owe the very considerable fortunes that he left them.

This holds equally true as to time; and I most earnestly recommend to you the care of those minutes and quarters of hours, in the course of the day, which people think too short to deserve their attention; and yet, if summed up at the end of the year, would amount to a very considerable portion of time. For example; you are to be at such a place at twelve, by appointment; you go out at eleven, to make two or three visits first; those persons are not at home: instead of sauntering away that intermediate time at a coffee-house, and possibly alone, return home, write a letter, beforehand, for the ensuing post, or take up a good book, I do not mean Descartes, Mallebranche, Locke, or Newton,¹ by way of dipping, but some book of rational amusement, and detached pieces, as Horace, Boileau, Waller, La Bruyere,² etc. This will be so much time saved, and by no means ill employed. Many people lose a great deal of time by reading; for they read frivolous and idle books, such as the absurd Romances of the two last centuries; where characters, that never existed, are insipidly displayed, and sentiments, that were never felt, pompously described: the oriental ravings and extravagancies of the

¹ Famous man in science and philosophy.

² Noted critics and poets.

Arabian Nights,¹ and Mogul Tales²; or the new flimsy *brochures*, that now swarm in France, of Fairy Tales; and such sort of idle frivolous stuff, that nourishes and improves the mind just as much as whipped cream would the body. Stick to the best established books in every language; the celebrated poets, historians, orators, or philosophers. By these means (to use a city metaphor) you will make fifty *per cent.* of that time, of which others do not make above three or four, or probably nothing at all.

Many people lose a great deal of their time by laziness; they loll and yawn in a great chair, tell themselves that they have not time to begin anything then, and that it will do as well another time. This is a most unfortunate disposition, and the greatest obstruction to both knowledge and business. At your age, you have no right nor claim to laziness; I have, if I please, being *emeritus*. You are but just listed in the world, and must be active, diligent, indefatigable. If ever you propose commanding with dignity, you must serve up to it with diligence. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

Dispatch is the soul of business; and nothing contributes more to dispatch, than method. Lay down a method for everything, and stick to it inviolably, as far as unexpected incidents may allow. Fix one certain hour and day in the week for your accompts, and keep them together in their proper order; by which means they will require very little time, and you can never be much cheated. Whatever letters and papers you keep, docket and tie them up in their respective classes, so that you may instantly have recourse to any one. Lay down a method also for your reading, for which you allot a certain share of your mornings; let it be in a consistent and consecutive course, and not in that desultory and immethodical manner, in which many people read

¹ Collection of oriental stories, some traditional, others traced to fact.

² Tales of the Tartars in India. Begun in 1526.

scraps of different authors, upon different subjects. Keep a useful and short commonplace book of what you read, to help your memory only, and not for pedantic quotations. Never read history without having maps, and a chronological book, or tables, lying by you, and constantly recurred to; without which, history is only a confused heap of facts. One method more I recommend to you, by which I have found great benefit, even in the most dissipated part of my life; that is, to rise early, and at the same hour every morning, how late soever you may have sat up the night before. This secures you an hour or two, at least, of reading or reflection, before the common interruptions of the morning begin; and it will save your constitution, by forcing you to go to bed early, at least one night in three.

You will say, it may be, as many young people would, that all this order and method is very troublesome, only fit for dull people, and a disagreeable restraint upon the noble spirit and fire of youth. I deny it; and assert, on the contrary, that it will procure you both more time and more taste for your pleasures; and so far from being troublesome to you, that after you have pursued it a month it would be troublesome to you to lay it aside. Business whets the appetite, and gives a taste to pleasures, as exercise does to food: and business can never be done without method: it raises the spirits for pleasure; and a *spectacle*, a ball, an assembly, will much more sensibly affect a man who has employed, than a man who has lost, the preceding part of the day; nay, I will venture to say, that a fine lady will seem to have more charms to a man of study or business, than to a saunterer. The same listlessness runs through his whole conduct, and he is as insipid in his pleasures as inefficient in everything else.

I hope you earn your pleasures, and consequently taste them; for, by the way, I know a great many men, who call themselves men of pleasure, but who, in truth, have none.

They adopt other people's indiscriminately, but without any taste of their own. I have known them often inflict excesses upon themselves, because they thought them genteel; though they sat as awkwardly upon them as other people's clothes would have done. Have no pleasures but your own, and then you will shine in them. What are yours? Give me a short history of them. . . . You may safely trust me; for, though I am a severe censor of vice and folly, I am a friend and advocate of pleasures, and will contribute all in my power to yours.

There is a certain dignity to be kept up in pleasures, as well as in business. In love, a man may lose his heart with dignity; but if he loses his nose, he loses his character into the bargain. At table, a man may with decency have a distinguishing palate; but indiscriminate voraciousness degrades him to a glutton. A man may play with decency; but if he games, he is disgraced. Vivacity and wit make a man shine in company; but trite jokes and loud laughter reduce him to a buffoon. Every virtue, they say, has its kindred vice; every pleasure, I am sure, has its neighboring disgrace. Mark carefully, therefore, the line that separates them, and rather stop a yard short, than step an inch beyond it.

I wish to God that you had as much pleasure in following my advice, as I have in giving it you; and you may the easier have it, as I give you none that is inconsistent with your pleasure. In all that I say to you, it is your interest alone that I consider: trust to my experience; you know you may to my affection. Adieu.

I have received no letter yet, from you or Mr. Harte.

LETTER XXXVIII.

CLEAR ENUNCIATION.

LONDON, July 9, O. S. 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SHOULD not deserve that appellation in return from you, if I did not freely and explicitly inform you of every corrigible defect, which I may either hear of, suspect, or at any time discover in you. Those who in the common course of the world will call themselves your friends, or whom, according to the common notions of friendship, you may possibly think such, will never tell you of your faults, still less of your weaknesses. But on the contrary, more desirous to make you their friend than to prove themselves yours, they will flatter both, and, in truth, not be sorry for either. Interiorly, most people enjoy the inferiority of their best friends. The useful and essential part of friendship to you is reserved singly for Mr. Harte and myself; our relations to you stand pure, and unsuspected of all private views. In whatever we say to you, we can have no interest but yours. We can have no competition, no jealousy, no secret envy or malignity. We are therefore authorized to represent, advise, and remonstrate; and your reason must tell you that you ought to attend to and believe us.

I am credibly informed that there is still a considerable hitch or hobble in your enunciation; and that when you speak fast, you sometimes speak unintelligibly. I have formerly and frequently laid my thoughts before you so fully upon this subject, that I can say nothing new upon it now. I must therefore only repeat, that your whole depends upon it. Your trade is to speak well, both in public and in private. The manner of your speaking is full as important as the matter, as more people have ears to be tickled than understandings to judge. Be your productions ever so good,

they will be of no use, if you stifle and strangle them in their birth. The best compositions of Corelli,¹ if ill executed, and played out of time, instead of touching, as they do when well performed, would only excite the indignation of the hearers, when murdered by an unskilful performer. But to murder your own productions, and that *coram populo*,² is a *Medean*³ cruelty, which Horace absolutely forbids. Remember of what importance Demosthenes,⁴ and one of the Gracchi,⁵ thought *enunciation*; read what stress Cicero⁶ and Quintilian⁷ lay upon it; even the herb-women at Athens were correct judges of it. Oratory with all its graces, that of enunciation in particular, is full as necessary in our government, as it ever was in Greece or Rome. No man can make a fortune or a figure in this country, without speaking, and speaking well, in public. If you will persuade, you must first please; and if you will please, you must tune your voice to harmony; you must articulate every syllable distinctly; your emphasis and cadences must be strongly and properly marked; and the whole together must be graceful and engaging; if you do not speak in that manner, you had much better not speak at all. All the learning you have, or ever can have, is not worth one groat without it. It may be a comfort and an amusement to you in your closet, but can be of no use to you in the world. Let me conjure you therefore to make this your only object, till you have absolutely conquered it, for that is in your power; think of nothing else, read and speak for nothing else. Read aloud, though alone, and read articulately and distinctly, as if you were reading

¹ Celebrated composer and violin player (1653-1713).

² In person among the people.

³ Medea, a famous character in Greek mythology, was the wife of Jason, whom she assisted in finding the Golden Fleece. She was noted for her sorceries and the practice of magic arts. She killed her rival, Glauce, and slew her children.

⁴ Athenian orator (384-322 B.C.).

⁵ Brothers; Roman statesmen (160-121 B.C.); (168-133 B.C.).

⁶ Roman orator (106-43 B.C.).

⁷ Roman rhetorician and critic (42-118 A.D.).

in public, and on the most important occasion. Recite pieces of eloquence, declaim scenes of tragedies to Mr. Harte, as if he were a numerous audience. If there is any particular consonant which you have a difficulty in articulating, as I think you had with the *R*, utter it millions and millions of times, till you have uttered it right. Never speak quick, till you have first learned to speak well. In short, lay aside every book and every thought, that does not directly tend to this great object, absolutely decisive of your future fortune and figure.

The next thing necessary in your destination is, writing correctly, elegantly, and in a good hand too; in which three particulars, I am sorry to tell you that you hitherto fail. Your hand-writing is a very bad one, and would make a scurvy figure in an office-book of letters, or even in a lady's pocket-book. But that fault is easily cured by care, since every man who has the use of his eyes and of his right hand can write whatever hand he pleases.

As to the correctness and elegancy of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors the other. In your letter to me of the 27th June, N. S., you omitted the date of the place, so that I only conjectured from the contents that you were at Rome.

Thus I have, with the truth and freedom of the tenderest affection, told you all your defects, at least all that I know or have heard of. Thank God they are all very curable, they must be cured, and I am sure you will cure them. That once done, nothing remains for you to acquire, or for me to wish you, but the turn, the manners, the address, and the *graces* of the polite world; which experience, observation, and good company will insensibly give you. Few people at your age have read, seen, and known so much as you have, and consequently few are so near as yourself to what I call perfection, by which I only mean being very near as well as the best. Far, therefore, from being discouraged by what

you still want, what you already have should encourage you to attempt, and convince you that by attempting you will inevitably obtain it. The difficulties which you have surmounted were much greater than any you have now to encounter. Till very lately your way has been only through thorns and briers; the few that now remain are mixed with roses. Pleasure is now the principal remaining part of your education. It will soften and polish your manners; it will make you pursue and at last overtake the *Graces*. Pleasure is necessarily reciprocal; no one feels who does not at the same time give it. To be pleased, one must please. What pleases you in others, will in general please them in you. Paris is indisputably the seat of the *Graces*; they will even court you, if you are not too coy. Frequent and observe the best companies there, and you will soon be naturalized among them; you will soon find how particularly attentive they are to the correctness and elegance of their language, and to the graces of their enunciation; they would even call the understanding of a man in question, who should neglect or not know the infinite advantages arising from them. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XXXIX.

GOOD PENMANSHIP. FORMING ACQUAINTANCES.

LONDON, January 28, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A BILL for ninety pounds sterling was brought me the other day, said to be drawn upon me by you; I scrupled paying it at first, not upon account of the sum, but because you had sent me no letter of advice, which is always done in those transactions; and still more, because I did not perceive that you had signed it. The person who presented it desired me to look again, and that I should

discover your name at the bottom; accordingly I looked again, and with the help of my magnifying glass did perceive that what I had first taken only for somebody's mark was, in truth, your name, written in the worst and smallest hand I ever saw in my life. I cannot write quite so ill, but it was something like this, *Philip Stanhope*.

However, I paid it at a venture; though I would almost rather lose the money, than that such a signature should be yours. All gentlemen, and all men of business, write their names always in the same way, that their signature may be so well known as not to be easily counterfeited; and they generally sign in rather a larger character than their common hand; whereas your name was in a less, and a worse, than your common writing. This suggested to me the various accidents which may very probably happen to you, while you write so ill. For instance; if you were to write in such a character to the secretary's office, your letter would immediately be sent to the decipherer, as containing matters of the utmost secrecy, not fit to be trusted to the common character. If you were to write so to an antiquarian, he (knowing you to be a man of learning) would certainly try it by the Runic, Celtic, or Slavonian alphabet, never suspecting it to be a modern character. . . . I have often told you that every man who has the use of his eyes and of his hand can write whatever hand he pleases; and it is plain that you can, since you write both the Greek and German characters, which you never learned of a writing-master, extremely well, though your common hand, which you learned of a master, is an exceeding bad and illiberal one, equally unfit for business or common use. I do not desire that you should write the labored, stiff character of a writing-master: a man of business must write quick and well, and that depends singly upon use. I would therefore advise you to get some very

good writing-master at Paris, and apply to it for a month only, which will be sufficient; for, upon my word, the writing of a genteel plain hand of business is of much more importance than you think. You will say, it may be, that when you write so very ill, it is because you are in a hurry: to which I answer, Why are you ever in a hurry? a man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry, because he knows, that whatever he does in a hurry he must necessarily do very ill. He may be in haste to dispatch an affair, but he will take care not to let that haste hinder his doing it well. Little minds are in a hurry, when the object proves (as it commonly does) too big for them; they run, they hare, they puzzle, confound, and perplex themselves; they want to do everything at once, and never do it at all. But a man of sense takes the time necessary for doing the thing he is about, well; and his haste to dispatch a business, only appears by the continuity of his application to it: he pursues it with a cool steadiness, and finishes it before he begins any other. I own your time is much taken up, and you have a great many different things to do; but remember that you had much better do half of them well, and leave the other half undone, than do them all indifferently. . . . Consider, that if your very bad writing could furnish me with matter of ridicule, what will it not do to others, who do not view you in that partial light that I do. There was a Pope, I think it was Pope Chigi, who was justly ridiculed for his attention to little things, and his inability in great ones; and therefore called *maximus in minimis*,¹ and *minus in maximis*.² Why? Because he attended to little things, when he had great ones to do. At this particular period of your life, and at the place you are now in, you have only little things to do; and you should make it habitual to you to do them well, that they may

¹ Very great in trifles.

² Very little in very great things.

require no attention from you when you have, as I hope you will have, greater things to mind. Make a good handwriting familiar to you now, that you may hereafter have nothing but your matter to think of, when you have occasion to write to kings and ministers. Dance, dress, present yourself habitually well now, that you may have none of those little things to think of hereafter, and which will be all necessary to be done well occasionally, when you will have greater things to do.

As I am eternally thinking of everything that can be relative to you, one thing has occurred to me, which I think necessary to mention, in order to prevent the difficulties which it might otherwise lay you under: it is this; as you get more acquaintances at Paris, it will be impossible for you to frequent your first acquaintances so much as you did, while you had no others. As, for example, at your first *début*, I suppose, you were chiefly at Madame Monconseil's,¹ Lady Hervey's,¹ and Madame du Boccage's. Now that you have got so many other houses, you cannot be at theirs so often as you used; but pray take care not to give them the least reason to think that you neglect or despise them for the sake of new and more dignified and shining acquaintances; which would be ungrateful and imprudent on your part, and never forgiven on theirs. Call upon them often, though you do not stay with them so long as formerly; tell them that you are sorry you are obliged to go away, but that you have such and such engagements, with which good breeding obliges you to comply; and insinuate that you would rather stay with them. In short, take care to make as many personal friends, and as few personal enemies, as possible. I do not mean, by personal friends, intimate and confidential friends, of which no man can hope to have half-a-dozen in the whole course of his life, but I mean friends in the common acceptance of the

¹ Mr. Stanhope's friends at Paris.

word, that is, people who speak well of you, and who would rather do you good than harm, consistently with their own interest, and no further. Upon the whole, I recommend to you again and again *les Grâces*. Adorned by them, you may, in a manner, do what you please; it will be approved of: without them, your best qualities will lose half their efficacy. Endeavor to be fashionable among the French, which will soon make you fashionable here. Monsieur de Matignon already calls you *le petit François*. If you can get that name generally at Paris, it will put you *à la mode*. Adieu, my dear child.

LETTER XL.

A QUOTATION AND AN EXAMPLE.

LONDON, Feb. 28, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS epigram in Martial,¹

“Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare,
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te;”²

has puzzled a great many people; who cannot conceive how it is possible not to love anybody, and yet not to know the reason why. I think I conceive Martial's meaning very clearly, though the nature of epigram, which is to be short, would not allow him to explain it more fully; and I take it to be this: *O Sabidis, you are a very worthy, deserving man; you have a thousand good qualities, you have a great deal of learning: I esteem, I respect, but for the soul of me I cannot love, you, though I cannot particularly say why. You are not*

¹ Roman poet: author of fourteen books of epigrams (43–104 A.D.).

² “I do not love thee, Dr. Fell;
The reason why, I cannot tell;
But this I'm sure I know full well,
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.” — *Anon.*

amiable; *you have not those engaging manners, those pleasing attentions, those graces, and that address, which are absolutely necessary to please, though impossible to define. I cannot say it is this or that particular thing that hinders me from loving you, it is the whole together; and upon the whole you are not agreeable.* How often have I, in the course of my life, found myself in this situation, with regard to many of my acquaintance, whom I have honored and respected, without being able to love! I did not know why, because, when one is young, one does not take the trouble, nor allow one's self the time, to analyze one's sentiments, and to trace them up to their source. But subsequent observation and reflection have taught me why.—There is a man,¹ whose moral character, deep learning, and superior parts, I acknowledge, admire, and respect; but whom it is so impossible for me to love, that I am almost in a fever whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in; but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the Graces. He throws anywhere, but down his throat, whatever he means to drink; and only mangles what he means to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of social life, he mistimes or misplaces everything. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately; mindless of the rank, character, and situation of those with whom he disputes, absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity or respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him, is to consider him a respectable Hottentot.¹

¹ Allusion to Dr. Samuel Johnson.

² A South African heathen race.

I remember, that when I came from Cambridge, I had acquired, among the pedants of that illiberal seminary, a sauciness of literature, a turn to satire and contempt, and a strong tendency to argumentation and contradiction. But I had been but a very little while in the world, before I found that this would by no means do; and I immediately adopted the opposite character: I concealed what learning I had; I applauded often, without approving; and I yielded commonly, without conviction. *Suaviter in modo* was my Law and my Prophets; and if I pleased (between you and me) it was much more owing to that than to any superior knowledge or merit of my own. *À propos*, the word *pleasing* puts one always in mind of Lady Hervey:¹ pray tell her that I declare her responsible to me for your pleasing; that I consider her as a pleasing Falstaff, who not only pleases herself, but is the cause of pleasing in others: that I know she can make anything of anybody; and that, as your governess, if she does not make you please, it must be only because she will not, and not because she cannot. I hope you are, *du bois dont on en fait*²; and if so, she is so good a sculptor, that I am sure she can give you whatever form she pleases. A versatility of manners is as necessary in social, as a versatility of parts is in political, life. One must often yield in order to prevail; one must humble one's self to be exalted; one must, like St. Paul, become all things to all men to gain some; and (by the way) men are taken by the same means, *mutatis mutandis*,³ that women are gained; by gentleness, insinuation, and submission. . . . I have of late been a sort of an *astronome malgré moi*,⁴ by bringing last Monday, into the House of Lords, a bill for reforming our present calendar, and taking the New Style. Upon which occasion I was obliged to talk some astronomi-

¹ Wife of Baron Hervey, an English politician.

² The stuff of which one makes them.

³ The necessary changes being made.

⁴ An astronomer in spite of me.

cal jargon, of which I did not understand one word, but got it by heart, and spoke it by rote from a master. I wished that I had known a little more of it myself; and so much I would have you know. But the great and necessary knowledge of all is, to know yourself and others: this knowledge requires great attention and long experience; exert the former, and may you have the latter! Adieu.

P.S.—I have this moment received your letters of the 27th February, and the 2nd March, N. S. The seal shall be done as soon as possible. I am glad that you are employed in Lord Albemarle's bureau; it will teach you, at least, the mechanical part of that business, such as folding, entering, and docketing letters; for you must not imagine that you are let into the *fin fin*¹ of the correspondence, nor indeed is it fit that you should at your age. However, use yourself to secrecy as to the letters you either read or write, that in time you may be trusted with *secret, very secret, separate, apart*, etc. I am sorry that this business interferes with your riding; I hope it is but seldom; but I insist upon its not interfering with your dancing-master, who is at this time the most useful and necessary of all the masters you have or can have.

LETTER XLI.

REFORMING THE CALENDAR.

LONDON, March 18, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I ACQUAINTED you in a former letter, that I had brought a bill into the House of Lords for correcting and reforming our present calendar, which is the Julian; and for adopting the Gregorian. I will now give you a more particular account of that affair; from which reflections will naturally occur to you, that I hope may be useful, and which I fear

¹ The very end.

you have not made. It was notorious that the Julian calendar was erroneous, and had overcharged the solar year with eleven days. Pope Gregory the 13th corrected this error; his reformed calendar was immediately received by all the Catholic Powers of Europe, and afterwards adopted by all the Protestant ones, except Russia, Sweden, and England. It was not, in my opinion, very honorable for England to remain in a gross and avowed error, especially in such company; the inconveniency of it was likewise felt by all those who had foreign correspondences, whether political or mercantile. I determined, therefore, to attempt the reformation; I consulted the best lawyers, and the most skilful astronomers, and we cooked up a bill for that purpose. But then my difficulty began: I was to bring in this bill, which was necessarily composed of law jargon and astronomical calculations, to both which I am an utter stranger. However, it was absolutely necessary to make the House of Lords think that I knew something of the matter; and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic¹ or Selavonian² to them, as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well: so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them. I gave them, therefore, only an historical account of calendars, from the Egyptian down to the Gregorian, amusing them now and then with little episodes; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the harmony and roundness of my periods, to my elocution, to my action. This succeeded, and ever will succeed; they thought I informed, because I pleased,

¹ The peoples once occupying France, Spain, northern Italy, western Germany and the British Isles, whose languages resembled those of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

² A race of peoples in two divisions, one comprising the Russians, Bulgarians, etc., the other the Poles, Bohemians, Moravians, etc.

them: and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them; when, God knows, I had not even attempted it. Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with infinite knowledge, and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of; but as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me. This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is *mob*, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob: their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests, are alone to be applied to. Understanding they have collectively none; but they have ears and eyes, which must be flattered and seduced; and this can only be done by eloquence, tuneful periods, graceful action, and all the various parts of oratory.

When you come into the House of Commons, if you imagine that speaking plain and unadorned sense and reason will do your business, you will find yourself most grossly mistaken. As a speaker, you will be ranked only according to your eloquence, and by no means according to your matter; everybody knows the matter almost alike, but few can adorn it. I was early convinced of the importance and powers of eloquence; and from that moment I applied myself to it. I resolved not to utter one word, even in common conversation, that should not be the most expressive, and the most elegant that the language could supply me with for that purpose; by which means I have acquired such a certain degree of habitual eloquence, that I must now really take some pains, if I would express myself very inelegantly. I want to inculcate this known truth into you, which you seem by no means to be convinced of yet, That ornaments are at present your only objects. Your sole business now

is to shine, not to weigh. Weight without lustre is lead. You had better talk trifles elegantly, to the most trifling woman, than coarse, inelegant sense to the most solid man; you had better return a dropped fan genteelly, than give a thousand pounds awkwardly; and you had better refuse a favor gracefully, than grant it clumsily. Manner is all, in everything: it is by manner only that you can please, and consequently rise. All your Greek will never advance you from Secretary to Envoy, or from Envoy to Ambassador; but your address, your manner, your air, if good, very probably may. Marcel can be of much more use to you than Aristotle.¹ I would, upon my word, much rather that you had Lord Bolingbroke's ² style and eloquence, in speaking and writing, than all the learning of the Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society, and the two Universities, united.

Having mentioned Lord Bolingbroke's style, which is, undoubtedly, infinitely superior to anybody's, I would have you read his works, which you have, over and over again, with particular attention to his style. Transcribe, imitate, emulate it, if possible: that would be of real use to you in the House of Commons, in negotiations, in conversation; with that, you may justly hope to please, to persuade, to seduce, to impose; and you will fail in those articles, in proportion as you fall short of it. Upon the whole, lay aside, during your year's residence at Paris, all thoughts of all that dull fellows call solid, and exert your utmost care to acquire what people of fashion call shining. . . . Adieu my dear child.

¹ Greatest of Greek philosophers (384-322 B.C.).

² St. John Henry Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751). English statesman and writer on political subjects.

LETTER XLII.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY.

LONDON, May 6, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE best authors are always the severest critics of their own works; they revise, correct, file, and polish them, till they think they have brought them to perfection. Considering you as my work, I do not look upon myself as a bad author, and am therefore a severe critic. I examine narrowly into the least inaccuracy or inelegancy, in order to correct, not to expose, them, and that the work may be perfect at last. You are, I know, exceedingly improved in your air, address, and manners, since you have been at Paris; but still there is, I believe, room for further improvement, before you come to that perfection which I have set my heart upon seeing you arrive at: and till that moment I must continue filing and polishing. . . . Mankind, as I have often told you, is more governed by appearances than by realities: and, with regard to opinion, one had better be really rough and hard, with the appearance of gentleness and softness, than just the reverse. Few people have penetration enough to discover, attention enough to observe, or even concern enough to examine, beyond the exterior; they take their notions from the surface, and go no deeper; they commend, as the gentlest and best-natured man in the world, that man who has the most engaging exterior manner, though possibly they have been but once in his company. An air, a tone of voice, a composure of countenance to mildness and softness, which are all easily acquired, do the business; and without further examination, and possibly with the contrary qualities, that man is reckoned the gentlest, the modestest, and the best-natured man alive. Happy the man who, with a certain fund of parts and knowledge,

gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble, at an age when most people are the bubbles of the world! for that is the common case of youth. They grow wiser, when it is too late: and, ashamed and vexed at having been bubbles so long, too often turn knaves at last. Do not therefore trust to appearances and outside yourself, but pay other people with them; because you may be sure that nine in ten of mankind do, and ever will, trust to them. This is by no means a criminal or blamable simulation, if not used with an ill intention. I am by no means blamable in desiring to have other people's good word, good will, and affection, if I do not mean to abuse them. Your heart, I know, is good, your sense is sound, and your knowledge extensive. What then remains for you to do? Nothing, but to adorn those fundamental qualifications with such engaging and captivating manners, softness, and gentleness, as will endear you to those who are able to judge of your real merit, and which always stand in the stead of merit with those who are not. I do not mean by this to recommend to you *le fade doux*,¹ the insipid softness of a gentle fool: no, assert your own opinion, oppose other people's when wrong; but let your manner, your air, your terms, and your tone of voice, be soft and gentle, and that easily and naturally, not affectedly. Use palliatives when you contradict; such as, *I may be mistaken, I am not sure, but I believe, I should rather think*, etc. Finish any argument or dispute with some little good-humored pleasantry, to show that you are neither hurt yourself, nor meant to hurt your antagonist; for an argument, kept up a good while, often occasions a temporary alienation on each side. . . . Adieu.

¹ Silly affectation.

LETTER XLIII.

EARLY LIFE.

LONDON, June 24, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AIR, address, manners, and graces are of such infinite advantage to whoever has them, and so peculiarly and essentially necessary for you, that now, as the time of our meeting draws near, I tremble for fear I should not find you possessed of them; and, to tell you the truth, I doubt you are not yet sufficiently convinced of their importance. There is, for instance, your intimate friend Mr. H—, who, with great merit, deep knowledge, and a thousand good qualities, will never make a figure in the world while he lives. Why? Merely for want of those external and showish accomplishments, which he began the world too late to acquire; and which, with his studious and philosophical turn, I believe he thinks are not worth his attention. He may, very probably, make a figure in the republic of letters; but he had ten thousand times better make a figure as a man of the world and of business in the republic of the United Provinces,¹ which, take my word for it, he never will.

As I open myself, without the least reserve, whenever I think that my doing so can be of any use to you, I will give you a short account of myself when I first came into the world, which was at the age you are of now, so that (by the way) you have got the start of me in that important article by two or three years at least. At nineteen, I left the university of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pedant: when I talked my best, I quoted Horace; when I aimed at

¹ The seven provinces of Holland, which in 1579 formed the Union of Utrecht and laid the foundation of the republic of the Netherlands.

being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid.¹ I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the Classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis*² of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns. With these excellent notions, I went first to the Hague, where, by the help of several letters of recommendation, I was soon introduced into all the best company; and where I very soon discovered that I was totally mistaken in almost every one notion I had entertained. Fortunately, I had a strong desire to please (the mixed result of good nature and a vanity by no means blamable), and was sensible that I had nothing but the desire. I therefore resolved, if possible, to acquire the means, too. I studied attentively and minutely the dress, the air, the manner, the address, and the turn of conversation of all those whom I found to be the people in fashion, and most generally allowed to please. I imitated them as well as I could; if I heard that one man was reckoned remarkably genteel, I carefully watched his dress, motions, and attitudes, and formed my own upon them. When I heard of another, whose conversation was agreeable and engaging, I listened and attended to the turn of it. I addressed myself, though *de très-mauvaise grâce*,³ to all the most fashionable fine ladies; confessed, and laughed with them at my own awkwardness and rawness, recommending myself as an object for them to try their skill in forming. By these means, and with a passionate desire of pleasing everybody, I came by degrees to please some; and, I can assure you, that what little figure I have made in the world, has been much more owing to that passionate desire I had

¹ Roman poet, one of the leading writers of the Augustine age (43 B.C. -18 A.D.).

² The robe of manhood.

³ With very bad grace.

of pleasing universally than to any intrinsic merit or sound knowledge I might ever have been master of. My passion for pleasing was so strong (and I am very glad it was so) that I own to you fairly, I wished to make every woman I saw in love with me, and every man I met with admire me. Without this passion for the object, I should never have been so attentive to the means; and I own I cannot conceive how it is possible for any man of good nature and good sense to be without this passion. Does not good nature incline us to please all those we converse with, of whatever rank or station they may be? And does not good sense and common observation show of what infinite use it is to please? Oh! but one may please by the good qualities of the heart, and the knowledge of the head, without that fashionable air, address, and manner, which is mere tinsel. I deny it. A man may be esteemed and respected, but I defy him to please without them. Moreover, at your age, I would not have contented myself with barely pleasing; I wanted to shine, and to distinguish myself in the world as a man of fashion and gallantry, as well as business. And that ambition or vanity, call it what you please, was a right one; it hurt nobody, and made me exert whatever talents I had. It is the spring of a thousand right and good things.

I was talking you over the other day with one very much your friend, and who had often been with you, both at Paris and in Italy. Among the innumerable questions, which you may be sure I asked him concerning you, I happened to mention your dress (for, to say the truth, it was the only thing of which I thought him a competent judge), upon which he said that you dressed tolerably well at Paris; but that in Italy you dressed so ill, that he used to joke with you upon it, and even to tear your clothes. Now, I must tell you, that at your age it is as ridiculous not to be very well dressed, as at my age it would be if I were to wear a white feather and red-heeled shoes. Dress is one of the

various ingredients that contribute to the art of pleasing; it pleases the eyes at least, and more especially of women. Address yourself to the senses, if you would please; dazzle the eyes, soothe and flatter the ears, of mankind; engage their heart, and let their reason do its worst against you. *Suaviter in modo* is the great secret. Whenever you find yourself engaged insensibly in favor of anybody, of no superior merits nor distinguished talents, examine, and see what it is that has made those impressions upon you: you will find it to be that *douceur*,¹ that gentleness of manners, that air and address, which I have so often recommended to you; and from thence draw this obvious conclusion, that what pleases you in them will please others in you; for we are all made of the same clay, though some of the lumps are a little finer, and some a little coarser; but, in general, the surest way to judge of others is to examine and analyze one's self thoroughly. When we meet I will assist you in that analysis, in which every man wants some assistance against his own self-love. Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

RULES FOR LETTERS OF BUSINESS.

LONDON, Dec. 19, O. S. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You are now entered upon a scene of business, where I hope you will one day make a figure. Use does a great deal, but care and attention must be joined to it. The first thing necessary in writing letters of business is extreme clearness and perspicuity; every paragraph should be so clear, and unambiguous, that the dullest fellow in the world may not be able to mistake it, nor obliged to read it twice

¹ Sweetness.

in order to understand it. This necessary clearness implies a correctness, without excluding an elegance of style. Tropes, figures, antitheses, epigrams, etc., would be as misplaced, and as impertinent, in letters of business, as they are sometimes (if judiciously used) proper and pleasing in familiar letters, upon common and trite subjects. In business, an elegant simplicity, the result of care not of labor, is required. Business must be well, not affectedly, dressed, but by no means negligently. Let your first attention be to clearness, and read every paragraph after you have written it, in the critical view of discovering whether it is possible that any one man can mistake the true sense of it; and correct it accordingly.

Our pronouns and relatives often create obscurity or ambiguity; be therefore exceedingly attentive to them, and take care to mark out with precision their particular relations. For example; Mr. Johnson acquainted me, that he had seen Mr. Smith, who had promised him to speak to Mr. Clarke, to return him (Mr. Johnson) those papers, which he (Mr. Smith) had left some time ago with him (Mr. Clarke): it is better to repeat a name, though unnecessarily, ten times, than to have the person mistaken once. *Who*, you know, is singly relative to persons, and cannot be applied to things; *which*, and *that*, are chiefly relative to things, but not absolutely exclusive of persons; for one may say, the man *that* robbed or killed such-a-one; but it is much better to say, the man *who* robbed or killed. One never says the man or the woman *which*. *Which* and *that*, though chiefly relative to things, cannot be always used indifferently as to things; and the *εμφωνια* must sometimes determine their place. For instance; The letter *which* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *which* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one; I would change it thus — The letter *that* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *that* came by

Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one.

Business does not exclude (as possibly you wish it did) the usual terms of politeness and good breeding; but, on the contrary, strictly requires them: such as, *I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship; Permit me to assure you; If I may be allowed to give my opinion*, etc. For the Minister abroad, who writes to the Minister at home, writes to his superior; possibly to his patron, or at least to one who he desires should be so.

Letters of business will not only admit of, but be the better for, *certain graces*: but then they must be scattered with a sparing and a skilful hand; they must fit their place exactly. They must decently adorn without encumbering, and modestly shine without glaring. But as this is the utmost degree of perfection in letters of business, I would not advise you to attempt those embellishments till you have first laid your foundation well.

Cardinal d'Ossat's letters are the true letters of business; those of Monsieur d'Avaux are excellent; Sir William Temple's are very pleasing, but, I fear, too affected. Carefully avoid all Greek or Latin quotations: and bring no precedents from the *virtuous Spartans, the polite Athenians, and the brave Romans*. Leave all that to futile pedants. No flourishes, no declamation. But (I repeat it again) there is an elegant simplicity and dignity of style absolutely necessary for good letters of business; attend to that carefully. Let your periods be harmonious, without seeming to be labored: and let them not be too long, for that always occasions a degree of obscurity. I should not mention correct orthography, but that you very often fail in that particular, which will bring ridicule upon you; for no man is allowed to spell ill. I wish, too, that your hand-writing were much better: and I cannot conceive why it is not, since every man may certainly write whatever hand he pleases. Neatness in

folding up, sealing, and directing your packets, is by no means to be neglected, though I dare say you think it is. But there is something in the exterior, even of a packet, that may please or displease; and consequently worth some attention.

You say that your time is very well employed, and so it is, though as yet only in the outlines and first *routine* of business. They are previously necessary to be known; they smooth the way for parts and dexterity. Business requires no conjuration nor supernatural talents, as people unacquainted with it are apt to think. Method, diligence, and discretion will carry a man of good strong common sense much higher than the finest parts without them can do. *Par negotiis, neque supra*,¹ is the true character of a man of business: but then it implies ready attention, and no *absences*; and a flexibility and versatility of attention from one object to another, without being engrossed by any one.

Be upon your guard against the pedantry and affectation of business, which young people are apt to fall into from the pride of being concerned in it young. They look thoughtful, complain of the weight of business, throw out mysterious hints, and seem big with secrets which they do not know. Do you, on the contrary, never talk of business, but to those with whom you are to transact it; and learn to seem *vacuus*,² and idle, when you have the most business. Of all things the *volto sciolto*, and the *pensieri stretti*, are necessary. Adieu.

¹ Equal to his business and not above it.

² Unoccupied.

LETTER XLV.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

LONDON, March 5, O. S. 1752.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As I have received no letter from you by the usual post, I am uneasy upon account of your health; for, had you been well, I am sure you would have written, according to your engagement, and my requisition. You have not the least notion of any care of your health: but, though I would not have you be a valetudinarian, I must tell you, that the best and most robust health requires some degree of attention to preserve. Young fellows, thinking they have so much health and time before them, are very apt to neglect or lavish both, and beggar themselves before they are aware: whereas a prudent economy in both, would make them rich indeed; and so far from breaking in upon their pleasures, would improve and almost perpetuate them. Be you wiser; and, before it is too late, manage both with care and frugality; and lay out neither, but upon good interest and security.

I will now confine myself to the employment of your time, which, though I have often touched upon formerly, is a subject that, from its importance, will bear repetition. You have, it is true, a great deal of time before you; but, in this period of your life, one hour usefully employed may be worth more than four-and-twenty hereafter; a minute is precious to you now, whole days may possibly not be so forty years hence. Whatever time you allow or can snatch for serious reading (I say snatch, because company, and the knowledge of the world, is now your chief object), employ it in the reading of some one book, and that a good one, till you have finished it: and do not distract your mind with various matters at the same time. In this light I

would recommend to you to read *toute de suite*¹ Grotius² *de Jure Belli et Pacis*,³ translated by Barbeyrac, and Puffendorf's⁴ *Jus Gentium*,⁵ translated by the same hand. For accidental quarters of hours, read works of invention, wit, and humor, of the best, and not of trivial, authors, either ancient or modern.

Whatever business you have, do it the first moment you can; never by halves, but finish it without interruption, if possible. Business must not be sauntered and trifled with; and you must not say to it, as Felix did to Paul, "at a more convenient season I will speak to thee."⁶ The most convenient season for business is the first; but study and business, in some measure, point out their own times to a man of sense; time is much oftener squandered away in the wrong choice and improper methods of amusement and pleasures.

Many people think that they are in pleasures, provided they are neither in study nor in business. Nothing like it; they are doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep. They contract habitudes from laziness, and they only frequent those places where they are free from all restraints and attentions. Be upon your guard against this idle profusion of time: and let every place you go to be either the scene of quick and lively pleasures, or the school of your improvements: let every company you go into, either gratify your senses, extend your knowledge, or refine your manners. Have some decent object of gallantry in view at some places; frequent others, where people of wit and taste assemble; get into others, where people of superior rank

¹ At once.

² Distinguished Dutch jurist, statesman, and theologian, founder of the science of international law (1583-1645).

³ Concerning the right of war and peace. Grotius's greatest work.

⁴ A noted German jurist, historian, publicist (1632-1694). His "Law of Nations,"⁵ here referred to was his chief work.

⁶ Acts of the Apostles 24 : 25.

and dignity command respect and attention from the rest of the company; but pray frequent no neutral places, from mere idleness and indolence. Nothing forms a young man so much as being used to keep respectable and superior company, where a constant regard and attention are necessary. It is true, this is at first a disagreeable state of restraint; but it soon grows habitual, and consequently easy; and you are amply paid for it, by the improvement you make, and the credit it gives you. What you said some time ago was very true, concerning *le Palais Royal*; ¹ to one of your age the situation is disagreeable enough; you cannot expect to be much taken notice of; but all that time you can take notice of others; observe their manners, decipher their characters, and insensibly you will become one of the company.

All this I went through myself, when I was of your age. I have sat hours in company, without being taken the least notice of; but then I took notice of them, and learned, in their company, how to behave myself better in the next, till by degrees I became part of the best companies myself. But I took great care not to lavish away my time in those companies, where there were neither quick pleasures nor useful improvements to be expected.

Sloth, indolence, and *mollesse* ² are pernicious and unbecoming a young fellow; let them be your *ressource* forty years hence at soonest. . . . Adieu.

¹ A palace in Paris, built by Cardinal Richelieu (1629-1634).

² Effeminacy.

LETTER XLVI.

THE WAYS OF SOCIETY.

LONDON, April 30, O. S. 1752.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

*Avoir du monde*¹ is, in my opinion, a very just and happy expression for having address, manners, and for knowing how to behave properly in all companies, and it implies very truly, that a man that has not these accomplishments is not of the world. Without them, the best parts are inefficient, civility is absurd, and freedom offensive. A learned parson, rusting in his cell at Oxford or Cambridge, will reason admirably well upon the nature of man; will profoundly analyze the head, the heart, the reason, the will, the passions, the senses, the sentiments, and all those subdivisions of we know not what, and yet, unfortunately, he knows nothing of man, for he has not lived with him; and is ignorant of all the various modes, habits, prejudices, and tastes, that always influence and often determine him. He views man as he does colors in Sir Isaac Newton's prism, where only the capital ones are seen, but an experienced dyer knows all their various shades and gradations, together with the result of their several mixtures. Few men are of one plain, decided color: most are mixed, shaded, and blended; and vary as much, from different situations, as changeable silks do from different lights. The man *qui a du monde*² knows all this from his own experience and observation: the conceited, cloistered philosopher knows nothing of it from his own theory: his practice is absurd and improper, and he acts as awkwardly as a man would dance who had never seen others dance, nor learned of a dancing-master, but who had only studied the notes by which dances are now kicked down as well as tunes. Ob-

¹ To be accustomed to society.² Who knows the ways of society.

serve and imitate, then, the address, the arts, and the manners of those *qui ont du monde*¹; see by what methods they first make, and afterwards improve, impressions in their favor. Those impressions are much oftener owing to little causes than to intrinsic merit, which is less volatile, and has not so sudden an effect. Strong minds have undoubtedly an ascendant over weak ones, as Galigai Maréchale d'Ancre very justly observed, when, to the disgrace and reproach of those times, she was executed² for having governed Mary of Medicis³ by the arts of witchcraft and magic. But then ascendant is to be gained by degrees, and by those arts only which experience and the knowledge of the world teaches, for few are mean enough to be bullied, though most are weak enough to be bubbled. I have often seen people of superior, governed by people of much inferior parts, without knowing or even suspecting that they were so governed. This can only happen when those people of inferior parts have more worldly dexterity and experience than those they govern. They see the weak and unguarded part, and apply to it: they take it, and all the rest follows. Would you gain either men or women, and every man of sense desires to gain both, *il faut du monde*.⁴ You have had more opportunities than ever any man had, at your age, of acquiring *ce monde*; you have been in the best companies of most countries, at an age when others have hardly been in any company at all. You are master of all those languages, which John Trott seldom speaks at all, and never well; consequently you need be a stranger nowhere. This is the way, and the only way, of having *du monde*; but if you have it not, and have still any coarse rusticity about you, may one not apply to you the *rusticus expectat*⁵ of Horace?

¹ Who know the ways of the world.

² On the 8th of July, 1617.

³ Queen Consort of Henry IV of France (1573-1642).

⁴ You must have the world.

⁵ The rustic waits.

This knowledge of the world teaches us more particularly two things, both which are of infinite consequence, and to neither of which nature inclines us; I mean, the command of our temper and of our countenance. A man who has no *monde* is inflamed with anger, or annihilated with shame, at every disagreeable incident: the one makes him act and talk like a mad man, the other makes him look like a fool. But a man who has *du monde* seems not to understand what he cannot or ought not to resent. If he makes a slip himself, he recovers it by his coolness, instead of plunging deeper by his confusion, like a stumbling horse. He is firm, but gentle; and practises that most excellent maxim, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*.¹ The other is the *volto sciolto e pensieri stretti*. People unused to the world have babbling countenances; and are unskilful enough to show what they have sense enough not to tell. In the course of the world, a man must very often put on an easy, frank countenance upon very disagreeable occasions; he must seem pleased when he is very much otherwise; he must be able to accost, and receive with smiles, those whom he would much rather meet with swords. In Courts he must not turn himself inside out. All this may, nay must, be done without falsehood and treachery: for it must go no farther than politeness and manners, and must stop short of assurances and professions of simulated friendship. Good manners, to those one does not love, are no more a breach of truth than "your humble servant" at the bottom of a challenge is; they are universally agreed upon, and understood, to be things of course. They are necessary guards of the decency and peace of society: they must only act defensively; and then not with arms poisoned with perfidy. Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle of every man, who hath either religion, honor, or prudence.

¹ Gentle in manner, resolute in deed.

Those who violate it may be cunning, but they are not able. Lies and perfidy are the refuge of fools and cowards.

Adieu !

P.S. — I must recommend to you again, to take your leave of all your French acquaintance, in such a manner as may make them regret your departure, and wish to see and welcome you at Paris again ; where you may possibly return before it is very long. This must not be done in a cold, civil manner, but with, at least, seeming warmth, sentiment, and concern. Acknowledge the obligations you have to them, for the kindness they have shown you during your stay at Paris ; assure them, that, wherever you are, you shall remember them with gratitude ; wish for opportunities of giving them proofs of your *plus tendre et respectueux souvenir* ;¹ beg of them, in case your good fortune should carry you to any part of the world where you could be of any the least use to them, that they would employ you without reserve. Say all this, and a great deal more, emphatically and pathetically ; for you know *si vis me flere*—. ² This can do you no harm, if you never return to Paris ; but if you do, as probably you may, it will be of infinite use to you. Remember, too, not to omit going to every house where you have ever been once, to take leave, and recommend yourself to their remembrance. The reputation which you leave at one place, where you have been, will circulate, and you will meet with it at twenty places, where you are to go. That is a labor never quite lost. . . .

¹ Most tender and respectful remembrance.

² If you wish me to weep.—Horace, “Ars Poetica.”

LETTER XLVII.

RULES FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL.

LONDON, May 11, O. S. 1752.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I WOULD by no means have anything, that is known to others, be totally unknown to you. It is a great advantage for any man to be able to talk or to hear, neither ignorantly nor absurdly, upon any subject; for I have known people, who have not said one word, hear ignorantly and absurdly; it has appeared in their inattentive and unmeaning faces.

This, I think, is as little likely to happen to you, as to anybody of your age; and if you will but add a versatility, and easy conformity of manners, I know no company in which you are likely to be *de trop*.¹

This versatility is more particularly necessary for you at this time, now that you are going to so many different places; for though the manners and customs of the several Courts of Germany are in general the same, yet every one has its particular characteristic; some peculiarity or other which distinguishes it from the next. This you should carefully attend to, and immediately adopt. Nothing flatters people more, nor makes strangers so welcome, as such an occasional conformity. I do not mean by this, that you should mimic the air and stiffness of every awkward German Court; no, by no means; but I mean that you should only cheerfully comply and fall in with certain local habits, such as ceremonies, diet, turn of conversation, etc. People who are lately come from Paris, and who have been a good while there, are generally suspected, and especially in Germany, of having a degree of contempt for every other place. Take great care that nothing of this kind appear, at least outwardly, in your behavior: but commend whatever de-

¹ Too much.

serves any degree of commendation, without comparing it with what you may have left, much better, of the same kind at Paris. As, for instance, the German kitchen is, without doubt, execrable, and the French delicious; however never commend the French kitchen at a German table; but eat of what you can find tolerable there, and commend it, without comparing it to anything better. I have known many British Yahoos,¹ who, though while they were at Paris conformed to no one French custom, as soon as they got anywhere else, talked of nothing but what they did, saw, and ate at Paris. The freedom of the French is not to be used indiscriminately at all the Courts in Germany, though their easiness may, and ought; but that, too, at some places more than others. The courts of Mannheim² and Bonn,³ I take to be a little more unbarbarized than some others; that of Maïence,⁴ an ecclesiastical one, as well as that of Treves⁵ (neither of which is more frequented by foreigners), retains, I conceive, a great deal of the Goth⁶ and Vandal⁷ still. There, more reserve and ceremony are necessary; and not a word of the French. At Berlin you cannot be too French. Hanover,⁸ Brunswick,⁸ Cassel,⁸ etc., are of the mixed kind, *un peu décrottés, mais pas assez*.⁹

Another thing, which I most earnestly recommend to you, not only in Germany, but in every part of the world, where you may ever be, is, not only real, but seeming attention,

¹ In "Gulliver's Travels," Swift gives this name to an imaginary race of brutes.

² City of Baden, commercial center of the Upper Rhine.

³ German city, on the Rhine, fifteen miles southwest of Cologne.

⁴ Mayence is a German city, capital of the Province of Rhine-Hesse, Hesse. Also spelt Mainz.

⁵ City in the Rhine Province, Prussia.

⁶ A Teutonic race dwelling in the region of the lower Danube, in the third century.

⁷ A race which first appeared in Southern Germany and in the first part of the fifth century ravaged Spain, France, and Northern Africa.

⁸ German cities.

⁹ A little polished, but not sufficiently so.

to whomever you speak to, or to whoever speaks to you. There is nothing so brutally shocking, nor so little forgiven, as a seeming inattention to the person who is speaking to you; and I have known many a man knocked down, for (in my opinion) a much slighter provocation, than that shocking inattention which I mean. I have seen many people, who while you are speaking to them, instead of looking at, and attending to, you, fix their eyes upon the ceiling, or some other part of the room, look out of the window, play with a dog, twirl their snuff-box. Nothing discovers a little, futile, frivolous mind more than this, and nothing is so offensively ill bred: it is an explicit declaration on your part, that every, the most trifling object, deserves your attention more than all that can be said by the person who is speaking to you. Judge of the sentiments of hatred and resentment, which such treatment must excite, in every breast where any degree of self-love dwells; and I am sure, I never yet met with that breast where there was not a great deal. I repeat it again and again (for it is highly necessary for you to remember it), that sort of vanity and self-love is inseparable from human nature, whatever may be its rank or condition; even your footman will sooner forget and forgive a beating, than any manifest mark of slight and contempt. Be therefore, I beg of you, not only really, but seemingly and manifestly, attentive to whoever speaks to you; nay more, take their tone, and tune yourself to their unison. Be serious with the serious, gay with the gay, and trifle with the triflers. In assuming these various shapes, endeavor to make each of them to seem to sit easy upon you, and even to appear to be your own natural one. This is the true and useful versatility of which a thorough knowledge of the world at once teaches the utility, and the means of acquiring.

I am very sure, at least I hope, that you will never make use of a silly expression, which is the favorite expression,

and the absurd excuse of all fools and blockheads; *I cannot do such a thing*:—a thing by no means either morally or physically impossible. *I cannot* attend long together to the same thing, says one fool: that is, he is such a fool that he will not. I remember a very awkward fellow, who did not know what to do with his sword, and who always took it off before dinner, saying, that he could not possibly dine with his sword on; upon which I could not help telling him that I really believed he could, without any probable danger either to himself or others. It is a shame and an absurdity, for any man to say, that he cannot do all those things which are commonly done by all the rest of mankind.

Another thing, that I must earnestly warn you against, is laziness; by which more people have lost the fruit of their travels, than (perhaps) by any other thing. Pray be always in motion. Early in the morning go and see things; and the rest of the day go and see people. If you stay but a week at a place, and that an insignificant one, see, however, all that is to be seen there; know as many people, and get into as many houses, as ever you can.

I recommend to you likewise, though probably you have thought of it yourself, to carry in your pocket a map of Germany, in which the post roads are marked; and also some short book of travels through Germany. The former will help to imprint in your memory situations and distances; and the latter will point out many things for you to see, that might otherwise possibly escape you; and which, though they may in themselves be of little consequence, you would regret not having seen, after having been at the places where they were.

Thus warned and provided for your journey, God speed you; *Felix faustumque sit!*¹ Adieu.

¹ May it be auspicious and fortunate. From Cicero's "De Divinatione."

LETTER XLVIII.

STUDY OF THE WORLD.

LONDON, May 31, O. S. 1752.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE world is the book, and the only one to which, at present, I would have you apply yourself; and the thorough knowledge of it will be of more use to you than all the books that ever were read. Lay aside the best book whenever you can go into the best company; and depend upon it you change for the better. However, as the most tumultuous life, whether of business or pleasure, leaves some vacant moments every day, in which a book is the refuge of a rational being, I mean now to point out to you the method of employing those moments (which will and ought to be but few) in the most advantageous manner. Throw away none of your time upon those trivial, futile books, published by idle or necessitous authors, for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers: such sort of books swarm and buzz about one every day; flap them away, they have no sting. *Certum pete finem*,¹ have some one object for those leisure moments, and pursue that object invariably till you have attained it; and then take some other. For instance; considering your destination, I would advise you to single out the most remarkable and interesting æras of modern history, and confine all your reading to that *Æra*. If you pitch upon the Treaty of Munster² (and that is the proper period to begin with, in the course which I am now recommending), do not interrupt it by dipping and deviating into other books, unrelative to it: but consult only the most authentic histories,

¹ Aim at a certain end.

² By the Peace of Westphalia, the Thirty Years' War between the Protestants of North Germany and the Catholics of South Germany came to an end. The principal treaty was signed at Munster, capital of the Province of Westphalia, Oct. 24, 1684; it secured the independence of Switzerland and the Netherlands and contained many other provisions.

letters, memoirs, and negotiations relative to that great transaction; reading and comparing them, with all that caution and distrust which Lord Bolingbroke recommends to you, in a better manner and in better words than I can. The next period, worth your particular knowledge, is the Treaty of the Pyrenees¹; which was calculated to lay, and in effect did lay, the foundation of the succession of the House of Bourbon² to the crown of Spain. Pursue that in the same manner, singling out of the millions of volumes written upon that occasion, the two or three most authentic ones; and particularly letters, which are the best authorities in matters of negotiation. Next come the Treaties of Nimeguen³ and Ryswick,⁴ postscripts in a manner to those of Munster and the Pyrenees. Those two transactions have had great light thrown upon them by the publication of many authentic and original letters and pieces. The concessions made at the Treaty of Ryswick, by the then triumphant Louis the Fourteenth, astonished all those who viewed things only superficially; but, I should think, must have been easily accounted for by those who knew the state of the kingdom of Spain, as well as of the health of its King, Charles the Second, at that time. The interval between the conclusion of the peace of Ryswick, and the breaking out of the great war in 1702, though a short, is a most interesting one. Every week of it almost produced some great event. Two Partition Treaties, the death of the King of Spain, his unexpected will, and the acceptance of it by Louis the Fourteenth, in violation of the second treaty of partition, just signed and ratified by him. Philip the Fifth, quietly and cheerfully received in Spain, and acknowl-

¹ Range of mountains separating France from Spain. The treaty between the two countries was made in 1659 and by its terms a large tract of Spanish territory was ceded to France.

² Royal house of France, Spain, and Naples.

³ City of Gelderland, Netherlands.

⁴ City of Holland, near the Hague.

edged as King of it, by most of those Powers, who afterwards joined in an alliance to dethrone him. I cannot help making this observation upon that occasion: That character has often more to do in great transactions, than prudence and sound policy: for Louis the Fourteenth gratified his personal pride, by giving a Bourbon King to Spain, at the expense of the true interest of France; which would have acquired much more solid and permanent strength by the addition of Naples, Sicily, and Lorraine,¹ upon the foot of the second Partition Treaty; and I think it was fortunate for Europe that he preferred the will. It is true, he might hope to influence his grandson; but he could never expect that his Bourbon posterity in France should influence his Bourbon posterity in Spain; he knew too well how weak the ties of blood are among men, and how much weaker still they are among Princes. The Memoirs of Count Harrach, and of Las Torres, give a good deal of light into the transactions of the Court of Spain, previous to the death of that weak King; and the letters of the Maréchal d'Harcourt, then the French Ambassador in Spain, of which I have authentic copies in manuscript, from the year 1698 to 1701, have cleared up that whole affair to me. I keep that book for you. It appears by those letters, that the imprudent conduct of the House of Austria, with regard to the King and Queen of Spain, and Madame Berlips, her favorite, together with the knowledge of the Partition Treaty, which incensed all Spain, were the true and only reasons of the will in favor of the Duke of Anjou.² Cardinal Portocarrero, nor any of the grandees, were bribed by France, as was generally reported and believed at that time; which confirms Voltaire's ³ anecdote upon that subject. Then opens a new

¹ A region lying between France and Germany. It now belongs to the latter.

² Famous noble house of France (1694-1778).

³ Famous French writer.

scene and a new century: Louis the Fourteenth's good fortune forsakes him, till the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene make him amends for all the mischief they had done him, by making the allies refuse the terms of peace offered by him at Gertruydenberg.¹ How the disadvantageous peace of Utrecht was afterwards brought on, you have lately read; and you cannot inform yourself too minutely of all those circumstances, that treaty being the freshest source, from whence the late transactions of Europe have flowed. The alterations which have since happened, whether by wars or treaties, are so recent, that all the written accounts are to be helped out, proved, or contradicted, by the oral ones of almost every informed person of a certain age or rank in life. For the facts, dates, and original pieces of this century, you will find them in Lamberti, till the year 1715, and after that time in Rousset's *Recueil*.

I do not mean that you should plod hours together in researches of this kind; no, you may employ your time more usefully; but I mean that you should make the most of the moments you do employ by method, and the pursuit of one single object at a time.

* * * * *

All that I have said may be reduced to these two or three plain principles: 1st, That you should now read very little, but converse a great deal; 2ndly, To read no useless, unprofitable books; and 3rdly, That those which you do read, may all tend to a certain object, and be relative to, and consequential of, each other. In this method, half-an-hour's reading, every day, will carry you a great way. People seldom know how to employ their time to the best advantage, till they have too little left to employ; but if, at your age, in the beginning of life, people would but consider the value of it, and put every moment to interest, it is incredible

¹ A town in the Netherlands, twenty-five miles S.E. Rotterdam.

what an additional fund of knowledge and pleasure such an economy would bring in. I look back with regret upon that large sum of time, which, in my youth, I lavished away idly, without either improvement or pleasure. Take warning betimes, and enjoy every moment; pleasures do not commonly last so long as life, and therefore should not be neglected; and the longest life is too short for knowledge, consequently every moment is precious. . . . Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

THE ART OF PLEASING.

LONDON, May 27, O. S. 1753.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE this day been tired, jaded, nay, tormented, by the company of a most worthy, sensible, and learned man, a near relation of mine, who dined and passed the evening with me. This seems a paradox, but is a plain truth; he has no knowledge of the world, no manners, no address; far from talking without book, as is commonly said of people who talk sillily, he only talks by book; which, in general conversation, is ten times worse. He has formed in his own closet, from books, certain systems of everything, argues tenaciously upon those principles, and is both surprised and angry at whatever deviates from them. His theories are good, but, unfortunately, are all impracticable. Why? Because he has only read, and not conversed. He is acquainted with books, and an absolute stranger to men. Laboring with his matter, he is delivered of it with pangs; he hesitates, stops in his utterance, and always expresses himself inelegantly. His actions are all ungraceful; so that, with all his merit and knowledge, I would rather converse six hours with the most frivolous tittle-tattle woman, who knew something of the world, than with him. The

preposterous notions of a systematical man, who does not know the world, tire the patience of a man who does. It would be endless to correct his mistakes, nor would he take it kindly; for he has considered everything deliberately, and is very sure that he is in the right. Impropriety is a characteristic, and a never-failing one, of these people. Regardless, because ignorant, of custom and manners, they violate them every moment. They often shock, though they never mean to offend; never attending either to the general character, or the particular distinguishing circumstances of the people to whom, or before whom, they talk: whereas the knowledge of the world teaches one that the very same things which are exceedingly right and proper in one company, time, and place, are exceedingly absurd in others. In short, a man who has great knowledge, from experience and observation of the characters, customs, and manners of mankind, is a being as different from, and as superior to, a man of mere book and systematical knowledge, as a well-managed horse is to an ass. Study therefore, cultivate, and frequent, men and women; not only in their outward, and consequently guarded, but in their interior, domestic, and consequently less disguised, characters, and manners. Take your notions of things, as by observation and experience you find they really are, and not as you read that they are or should be; for they never are quite what they should be. For this purpose do not content yourself with general and common acquaintance; but, wherever you can, establish yourself, with a kind of domestic familiarity, in good houses. For instance; go again to Orli for two or three days, and so at two or three *reprises*.¹ Go and stay two or three days at a time at Versailles,² and improve and extend the acquaintance you have there. Be

¹ Repetitions.

² Capital of Department of Seine-et-Oise, 11 miles S. W. of Paris. Contains the royal palace of Louis XIII. and XIV.

at home at St. Cloud¹; and whenever any private person of fashion invites you to pass a few days at his country-house, accept of the invitation. This will necessarily give you a versatility of mind, and a facility to adopt various manners and customs; for everybody desires to please those in whose house they are; and people are only to be pleased in their own way. Nothing is more engaging than a cheerful and easy conformity to people's particular manners, habits, and even weaknesses; nothing (to use a vulgar expression) should come amiss to a young fellow. He should be, for good purposes, what Alcibiades² was commonly for bad ones, a Proteus,³ assuming with ease, and wearing with cheerfulness, any shape. Heat, cold, luxury, abstinence, gravity, gaiety, ceremony, easiness, learning, trifling, business, and pleasure, are modes which he should be able to take, lay aside, or change occasionally, with as much ease as he would take or lay aside his hat. All this is only to be acquired by use and knowledge of the world, by keeping a great deal of company, analyzing every character, and insinuating yourself into the familiarity of various acquaintance. A right, a generous ambition to make a figure in the world, necessarily gives the desire of pleasing; the desire of pleasing points out, to a great degree, the means of doing it; and the art of pleasing is, in truth, the art of rising, of distinguishing one's self, of making a figure and a fortune in the world. . . . The care which has been taken of you, and (to do you justice) the care you have taken of yourself, has left you, at the age of nineteen only, nothing to acquire but the knowledge of the world, manners, address, and those exterior accomplishments. But they are great and necessary acquisitions to

¹ Town near Paris, once residence of French kings.

² Noted politician and general of Greece (450-404 B.C.).

³ In classic mythology, a sea-god, who had the power of assuming different shapes.

those who have sense enough to know their true value; and your getting them before you are one-and-twenty, and before you enter upon the active and shining scene of life, will give you such an advantage over all your contemporaries, that they cannot overtake you; they must be distanced. You may probably be placed about a young Prince, who will probably be a young King. There all the various arts of pleasing, the engaging address, the versatility of manners, the *brilliant*, the Graces, will outweigh and yet outrun all solid knowledge and unpolished merit. Oil yourself therefore, and be both supple and shining for that race, if you would be first, or early, at the goal. Ladies will most probably, too, have something to say there; and those who are best with them, will probably be best *somewhere else*. Labor this great point, my dear child, indefatigably; attend to the very smallest parts, the minutest graces, the most trifling circumstances, that can possibly concur in forming the shining character of a complete Gentleman, a man of business and pleasure. . . . In this view observe the shining part of every man of fashion, who is liked and esteemed; attend to, and imitate that particular accomplishment for which you hear him chiefly celebrated and distinguished; then collect those various parts, and make yourself a mosaic of the whole. No one body possesses everything, and almost everybody possesses some one thing worthy of imitation; only choose your models well; and, in order to do so, choose by your ear more than by your eye. The best model is always that which is most universally allowed to be the best, though in strictness it may possibly not be so. We must take most things as they are, we cannot make them what we would, nor often what they should be; and where moral duties are not concerned it is more prudent to follow, than to attempt to lead. Adieu.

LETTER L.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

LONDON, February 26, 1754.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE received your letters of the 4th from Munich, and of the 11th from Ratisbon; but I have not received that of the 31st January, to which you refer in the former. It is to this negligence and uncertainty of the post that you owe your accidents between Munich and Ratisbon; for had you received my letters regularly, you would have received one from me before you left Munich, in which I advised you to stay, since you were so well there. But at all events, you were in the wrong to set out from Munich in such weather and such roads; since you could never imagine that I had set my heart so much upon your going to Berlin as to venture your being buried in the snow for it. Upon the whole, considering all, you are very well off. You do very well, in my mind, to return to Munich, or at least to keep within the circle of Munich, Ratisbon, and Mannheim, till the weather and the roads are good: stay at each or any of those places as long as ever you please, for I am extremely indifferent about your going to Berlin.

As to our meeting, I will tell you my plan, and you may form your own accordingly. I propose setting out from hence the last week in April, then drinking the Aix-la-Chapelle¹ waters for a week, and from thence being at Spa about the 15th of May, where I shall stay two months at most, and then returning straight to England. As I both hope and believe that there will be no mortal at Spa during my residence there, the fashionable season not beginning till the middle of July, I would by no means have you come

¹ City in the Rhine Province, Prussia, commercial center, — manufacturing city, — famous for its hot sulphur springs.

there at first, to be locked up with me and some few *Capucins*,¹ for two months in that miserable hole; but I would advise you to stay where you like best, till about the first week in July, and then to come and pick me up at Spa, or meet me upon the road at Liege² or Brussels.² As for the intermediate time, should you be weary of Mannheim and Munich, you may, if you please, go to Dresden to Sir Charles Williams, who will be there before that time; or you may come for a month or six weeks to the Hague, or, in short, go or stay wherever you like best. So much for your motions.

As you have sent for all the letters directed to you at Berlin, you will receive from thence volumes of mine, among which you will easily perceive that some were calculated for a supposed perusal previous to your opening them. I will not repeat anything contained in them, excepting that I desire you will send me a warm and cordial letter of thanks for Mr. Eliot, who has in the most friendly manner imaginable fixed you at his own borough of Liskeard, where you will be elected, jointly with him, without the least opposition or difficulty. I will forward that letter to him into Cornwall, where he now is.

Now, that you are soon to be a man of business, I heartily wish you would immediately begin to be a man of method, nothing contributing more to facilitate and dispatch business than method and order. Have order and method in your accounts, in your reading, in the allotment of your time, in short, in everything. You cannot conceive how much time you will save by it, nor how much better everything you do will be done. . . . As you must be conscious that you are extremely negligent and slatternly, I hope you will resolve not to be so for the future. Prevail with yourself only to observe good method and order for one fort-

¹ Order of monks, founded in Italy in 1528.

² Cities of Belgium.

night, and I will venture to assure you that you will never neglect them afterwards, you will find such conveniency and advantage arising from them. Method is the great advantage that lawyers have over other people in speaking in Parliament; for, as they must necessarily observe it in their pleadings in the Courts of Justice, it becomes habitual to them everywhere else. Without making you a compliment, I can tell you with pleasure, that order, method, and more activity of mind, are all that you want, to make, some day or other, a considerable figure in business. You have more useful knowledge, more discernment of characters, and much more discretion than is common at your age; much more, I am sure, than I had at that age.—Experience you cannot yet have, and therefore trust in the meantime to mine. I am an old traveller; am well acquainted with all the by, as well as the great, roads; I cannot misguide you from ignorance, and you are very sure I shall not from design.

I can assure you that you will have no opportunity of subscribing yourself, my Excellency's, etc. Retirement and quiet were my choice some years ago, while I had all my senses, and health and spirits enough to carry on business; but now I have lost my hearing, and find my constitution declining daily, they are become my necessary and only refuge. I know myself (no common piece of knowledge, let me tell you), I know what I can, what I cannot, and consequently what I ought to do. I ought not, and therefore will not, return to business, when I am much less fit for it than I was when I quitted it. Still less will I go to Ireland, where, from my deafness and infirmities, I must necessarily make a different figure from that which I once made there. My pride would be too much mortified by that difference. The two important senses of seeing and hearing should not only be good, but quick, in business; and the business of a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (if he will

do it himself) requires both those senses in the highest perfection. . . . Moreover, I look upon myself now to be *emeritus*¹ in business, in which I have been near forty years together; I give it up to you: apply yourself to it, as I have done, for forty years, and then I consent to your leaving it for a philosophical retirement, among your friends and your books. Statesmen and beauties are very rarely sensible of the gradations of their decay; and, too sanguinely hoping to shine on in their meridian, often set with contempt and ridicule. I retired in time, *uti conviva satur*²; or, as Pope says, still better, "Ere tittering youth shall shove you from the stage." My only remaining ambition is to be the counsellor and minister of your rising ambition. Let me see my own youth revived in you; let me be your Mentor, and, with your parts and knowledge, I promise you, you shall go far. You must bring, on your part, activity and attention, and I will point out to you the proper objects for them. I own I fear but one thing for you, and that is what one has generally the least reason to fear, from one of your age; I mean your laziness, which, if you indulge, will make you stagnate in a contemptible obscurity all your life. It will hinder you from doing anything that will deserve to be written, or from writing anything that may deserve to be read; and yet one or other of these two objects should be at least aimed at by every rational being. I look upon indolence as a sort of *suicide*; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetites of the brute may survive. Business by no means forbids pleasures; on the contrary, they reciprocally season each other; and I will venture to affirm, that no man enjoys either in perfection that does not join both. They whet the desire for each other. Use yourself therefore, in time, to be alert and diligent in your little concerns: never procrastinate, never put off till to-morrow

¹ One retired from active official service.

² As a sated banqueter. Horace, Bk. 1. Satire 1, line 119.

what you can do to-day : and never do two things at a time : pursue your object, be it what it will, steadily and indefatigably ; and let any difficulties (if surmountable) rather animate than slacken your endeavors. Perseverance has surprising effects.

I wish you would use yourself to translate, every day, only three or four lines, from any book, in any language, into the correctest and most elegant English that you can think of ; you cannot imagine how it will insensibly form your style, and give you an habitual elegance : it would not take you up a quarter of an hour in a day. This letter is so long, that it will hardly leave you that quarter of an hour, the day you receive it. So good-night.

MAXIMS OF LORD CHESTERFIELD.

In a letter of Lord Chesterfield's to his son, bearing the date of January 15, 1753, he writes:—

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I NEVER think my time so well employed as when I think it employed to your advantage. You have long had the greatest share of it: you now engross it: The moment is now decisive; the piece is going to be exhibited to the public; the mere outlines, and the general coloring are not sufficient to attract the eye, and to secure applause; but the last finishing, artful and delicate strokes are necessary. Skilful judges will discern and acknowledge their merit; the ignorant will, without knowing why, feel their power. In that view, I have thrown together, for your use, the enclosed maxims; or to speak more properly, observations on men and things: for I have no merit as to the invention: and, instead of giving way to my imagination, I have only consulted my memory; and my conclusions are all drawn from facts, not from fancy. Most maxim-mongers have preferred the prettiness to the justness of a thought, and the turn to the truth; but I have refused myself to everything that my own experience did not justify and confirm. . . . Adieu.

Some of the proverbial sayings in this list are taken from the collection of which Lord Chesterfield speaks in the foregoing letter. The remaining maxims appear in the regular course of his correspondence.

A proper secrecy is the only mystery of able men; mystery is the only secrecy of weak and cunning ones.

A man who tells nothing, or who tells all, will equally have nothing told to him.

Next to the doing of things that deserve to be written, there is nothing that gets a man more credit, or gives him more pleasure, than to write things that deserve to be read.

People will always be shy of receiving any man who comes from a place where the plague rages, let him look ever so healthy.

I would wish you to be a Corinthian edifice, upon a Tuscan foundation; the latter having the utmost strength and solidity to support, and the former all possible ornaments to decorate.

Whoever is in a hurry shows that the thing he is about is too big for him. Haste and hurry are very different things.

In the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

A man of the world must, like the chameleon, be able to take every different hue; which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary complaisance, for it relates only to manners and not to morals.

Pray be always in motion. Early in the morning go and see things; and the rest of the day go and see people.

Company is a republic too jealous of its liberties to suffer a dictator even for a quarter of an hour.

Good breeding carries along with it a dignity that is respected by the most petulant. Ill breeding invites and authorizes the familiarity of the most timid.

When a man of sense happens to be in that disagreeable situation, in which he is obliged to ask himself more than once, *What shall I do?* he will answer himself, Nothing.

When his reason points out to him no good way, or at least no way less bad than another, he will stop short and wait for light. A little, busy mind runs on at all events, must be doing; and, like a blind horse, fears no dangers, because he sees none.

No man ever said a pert thing to the Duke of Marlborough. No man ever said a civil one (though many a flattering one) to Sir Robert Walpole.

I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the Ancients; but still less would have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the Moderns without contempt and of the Ancients without idolatry. Judge them well by their merits, but not by their ages; and if you happen to have an Elzevir classic in your pocket, neither show it nor mention it.

Patience is a most necessary qualification for business; many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request. One must seem to hear the unreasonable demands of the petulant unmoved, and the tedious details of the dull untired. That is the least price a man must pay for a high station.

A young man, be his merit what it will, can never raise himself; but must, like the ivy round the oak, twine himself round some man of great power and interest. You must belong to a minister some time before anybody will belong to you. And an inviolable fidelity to that minister, even in his disgrace, will be meritorious, and recommend you to the next. Ministers love a personal, much more than a party, attachment.

As kings are begotten and born like other men, it is to be presumed that they are of the human species; and perhaps, had they the same education, they might prove like other men. But, flattered from their cradles, their hearts are corrupted and their heads are turned, so that they seem to be a species by themselves.

Lay aside the best book whenever you go into the best company; depend upon it you change for the better.

Common sense (which in truth is very uncommon) is the best sense I know of; abide by it; it will counsel you best.

Lord Shaftesbury recommends self-conversation to all authors; and I would recommend it to all men; they would be better for it; if a man would allot half an hour every night for this self-conversation, and recapitulate with himself whatever he has done, right or wrong, in the course of the day, he would be both the better and the wiser for it.

Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects, or add lustre to your perfections; but on the contrary, it may, and nine times out of ten, will, make the former more glaring and the latter obscure.

A man who cannot command his temper, his attention, and his countenance, should not think of being a man of business.

If a fool knows a secret, he tells it because he is a fool; if a knave knows one, he tells it wherever it is his interest to tell it.

Distrust all those who love you extremely upon a very slight acquaintance, and without any visible reason. Be upon your guard, too, against those who confess, as their weaknesses, all the cardinal virtues.

Smooth your way to the head through the heart. The way of reason is a good one; but it is commonly something longer, and perhaps not so sure.

It is always right to detect a fraud, and to perceive a folly; but it is often very wrong to expose either. A man of business should always have his eyes open; but must often seem to have them shut.

Never apply for what you see very little probability of obtaining.

It is hard to say which is the greater fool, he who tells the whole truth, or he who tells no truth at all. Character is as necessary in business as in trade. No man can deceive often in either.

Knowledge may give weight, but accomplishments only give lustre; and many more people see than weigh.

Take care always to form your establishment so much within your income, as to leave a sufficient fund for unexpected contingencies and a prudent liberality.

Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out and strike it, merely to show that you have one.

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